ROLE OF EDUCATION IN LIBERALIZATION AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN THE ARAB WORLD: A STUDY OF KUWAIT

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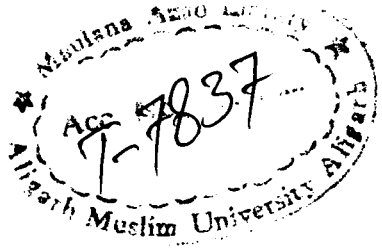

It may not be an act of unworthiness to reiterate that education is of value in itself (intrinsic value) and is valued for what it can do (instrumental value). Education is desired for itself as it opens up a vast world of opportunities and ideas to the educated person. It is also of great instrumental value in the process of economic, social and political growth and development. There is strong empirical correlation between education and political change. Education empowers and, through empowerment, affects larger socio-political processes. Exemplifying this hypothetical correlation an important phase in the growth of the theory of political development is perhaps best represented by S.M Lipset's own work, Political Man, regarded as representing a major departure from the established methodological orientation of American political sociology which at that time was unquestionably dominated by the approach systematized by Talcott Parsons.

The Parsonian method whose pedigree is traced to Max Weber and his study of the cultural foundations of the origin of capitalism in Europe led the inquiry into social action and social institutions, including politics and political institutions, through a study of the values and norms of a society. The result was framework, which stressed the elements of consensus with in a social system. In the contemporary times, S.M Lipset, unravelled the "social bases of politics", and came to grip with the problem of conflict in society. Lipset's method is that of multivariate analysis. Instead of trying to identify any one particular variable, which determined the development of a stable democratic system of the western kind, which still remained the *telos* of political development, he attempted to find a cluster of variables, which correlated with what he identified a priori as developed political systems. His investigation showed that factors such as wealth, industrialization, education and urbanization all correlated fairly highly with European and English-speaking stable democracies, and then, at a decreasing rate, with European and English-speaking unstable democracies and dictatorships, Latin American democracies and Latin American stable dictatorships. This cluster of variables, which together he called economic development, was, therefore, crucial in estimating the prospects of the growth of a developed polity out of a backward society.

But even within this cluster of variables, all were not equally important. Citing Daniel Lerners study on the, Middle East,[1] Lipset emphasized quite strongly that of all these variables, it is education which is definitely a necessary condition for development and democracy.

Education presumably broadens man's outlook, enables him to understand the need for norms of tolerance, restrains him from adhering to extremist doctrines, and increases his capacity to make rational electoral choices. Further, at the level of individual behavior, the higher ones education, the more likely one is to believe in democratic values and support democratic practices. Thus it is only after there is a sufficient spread of literacy, and therefore a wide area for the operation of the media of communication that democracy begins to function as a stable social order.

Long dominated by authoritarian regimes, the Arab World, today, faces the challenge of change posed by a variety of internal and external factors. In recent years, significant degrees of political liberalization have already been evident in a number of Arab states — although the extent to which this presages an eventual democratization of their political systems is far from evident. Else where, regimes have made more modest, perhaps only cosmetic, reforms or resisted demands for expanded public freedoms and participation.

The first is that the study of democratization in the Arab world in general and Kuwait in particular does not, and should not, stand alone: it has to be connected up to wider theoretical studies of the phenomena of democracy, liberalization and democratization. Throughout the thesis, varying definitions of the term "democracy" are used and discussed.[2] This reflects the diversity of approaches to evaluate the progress made in the

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[1] Daniel Lerners. (1958). *The Passing of Traditional Society*, Free Press: Illinois.

[2] For some seminal writings on the processes of democratization, see Robert A. Dahl (1971). *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead (1986). eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press; Robert A. Dahl (1989) *Democracy and Its Critics*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset (1990). eds., *Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers; Samuel Huntington (1991) *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press; Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, (1996). *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press;

region toward democratization, and it explains the nature of optimism and pessimism about the region's prospects for both democratization and resulting peace dividends. Such disagreement is of course not unique. As Schmitter argues, "[a]cross time and space – not to mention culture and class – opinions have differed concerning what institutions and rules are to be considered democratic . . . [while] . . .[t]he concrete institutions and rules which have been established in different 'democratic' countries have similarly differed."[3] Recognizing these differences in definition and expectation and accepting the fact that there is more than one "ideal" model of democracy – in a universal but also, much more significantly, in a regional context – are key to peaceful relations among nascent democracies and to relations between them and established democracies. As Schmitter further notes, "[g]iven the positive connotation which the term [democracy] has acquired, each country tends to claim that the way its institutions and rules are structured is the most democratic . . . [while] . . . [t]he 'others,' especially one's enemies and competitors, are accused of having some inferior type of democracy or another kind of regime altogether."[4] Such arrogance breeds resentment, which, in the long run, breeds violence. In particular, the application, experience, and debate surrounding the validity of the democratic peace are thus in no small measure highly dependent on the compatibility of definitions and expectations of what constitutes a democracy, as well as on a thorough understanding and appreciation of the vulnerabilities generated by the transition process from autocracy to democracy.[5] A second factor concerns the time-span covered. Democratization has been a major theme in Arab world studies for only about twenty

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and Larry Diamond (1999). *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. For a very recent discussion, see *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no. 3, July 2002, on the theme of 'Debating the Transition Paradigm.'

[3] Philippe C. Schmitter, 'Some Basic Assumptions about the Consolidation of Democracy,' in Takashi Inoguchi, Edward Newman, and John Keane (1998). eds., *The Changing Nature of Democracy*, Tokyo: United Nations University Press, p. 32.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] On this discussion, see, for instance, Rudolph J. Rummel, 'Democracies Don't Fight Democracies,' available at http://www.peacemagazine.org/9905/rummel.htm; Miriam Fendius Elman (1997). ed., *Paths to Peace: Is Democracy the Answer?* Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press; Thomas Schwartz and Kiran Skinner (1999). 'The Myth of Democratic Pacifism,' *Hoover Digest*, No. 2; Spencer R. Weart (1997). *Never at War: Why Democracies Will Not Fight One Another*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller (1996). eds., *Debating the Democratic Peace*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; Torak Barkawi and Mark Laffey (2001). eds., *Democracy, Liberalism, and War: Rethinking the Democratic Peace Debate*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers; and Paul H. Huth (2003). *The Democratic Peace and Territorial Conflict in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

years. Although earlier theoretical literature is relevant to the issue, there is no body of work on democratization in the Arab world which can be traced through the 35-year period. Though significant political changes are on the anvil, however, desirable changes in the direction of democratization are either dim or quite nascent. Escaping thus from the teleological tunnel permits the identification of two major developments. The first is an oscillation between controlled education, political liberalizations and demineralization, and the second consists of five areas of change within regimes: legitimation, elites, institution building, co-optation, and regimes' reactions to external influences. The second trend is particularly crucial for understanding the lack of democratization in the Arab world. Finally, the academic study of democratization in the Arab world can not be dissociated from the democratization policies pursued by Western governments. Much of the academic work on democratization in the Arab world has been policy-related: geared to recommending to Western governments how they can help promote the process. The relevance of this stems from the increased willingness of Western governments, over the past decade, to play an active role in promoting liberal democracy in other parts of the world. An assessment of the development of education, liberalization and democratization studies, therefore, needs to take into account the relationship between the academic and governmental agendas, and the degree to which its promotion in the Arab world in general and Kuwait in particular has in fact been a useful policy to pursue. This thesis examines, first, the main contributions which have been made to the understanding of education, liberalization democratization in the Arab world especially in Kuwait. And secondly the inadequacies in the existing literature. Finally, it will be suggested that the international community, both academic and governmental, could achieve more for the peoples of the Arab world by changing the emphasis of its current concerns. Less stress should be placed on the generalized concept of liberal democracy, and a closer focus should be placed on an extensive yet clearly-defined set of characteristics which comprise Islamic ethos, education and good governance.

The thesis addresses a number of key issues that will determine failure or success in establishing sustainable democratization efforts in the region. Peace and stability, both domestic and interstate, and both negative and positive, are necessary for democratization

processes to take hold. Simultaneously, democratization is necessary for peace and stability to unfold and, most importantly, to endure. Attempts to pursue peace without democratization, or democratization without peace, exacerbate instead of reduce the prospects of tension and war within and between the countries of the Arab world.

Political reform in the Arab world has thus far taken place through a process of formal regime-oppositions, negotiations, and discussions whose content, scope, and timing have been controlled by ruling elites. The basic goal has been to promote a sufficient level of political openness in civil society, media, and the political-electoral arena for opposition elites to let off steam, without affording them the opportunity or capacity to undermine the institutional, legal, and informal props that sustain regime control of the political system.

The top-down nature of this process is by no means unique to the Arab world. On the contrary, regime-initiated liberalizations have been a common feature of regime transitions in many parts of the globe. But what distinguishes the Arab cases is the failure (or perhaps unwillingness) of civil society groups and political parties to take advantage of opportunities to press for genuine democratization as opposed to regime managed liberalization.

Meanwhile, there is a lively discussion taking place throughout the Arab world about several aspects of education and reform measures that are needed. This discussion, which has gone largely unnoticed in the West, has been generated by several developments in the region. Those developments include strong demand for education at all levels, the resulting pressure on educational facilities and budgets, and concern on the part of the private sector that the education system is not providing graduates with appropriate skills to deal with the challenge of globalization. Arab students have a variety of opportunities now, including private educational institutions, English-medium schools, religious-curriculum institutions, and study abroad. The thesis also attempts to describe the fundamental attributes of educational systems in the Arab world and then reviews the main issues that are being discussed by Arab leaders in the private sector, government and academia, about areas that need reform.

There are, at present, devastating changes and conflicts of interest in the world which place the Arab countries in the face of long-term changes which could reshape all the dimensions of human life. This situation requires the Arab governments and active forces in Arab society to consolidate their invulnerability, to protect their identity and overall national security, and to measure the time to come in order to secure for themselves an effective foothold at a time of fierce competition and increasing reliance on the products of the information and communication revolution and knowledge explosion. One of the most important engines which could help the Arabs control their own decisions is doubtless to avoid deficit in knowledge capital and enhance the level and quality of the knowledge being produced and applied. In this respect, it should be mentioned that the Arab countries are endowed with a large intellectual elite and a wealth of experience which can provide innovative solutions and alternatives based on a full awareness of changes and on a realistic approach.[6]

Since the early, 1980s there has been an upsurge in academic interest in the processes and potentialities-of democratic transition. Initially scholars of comparative politics devoted relatively little attention to, or hope for, processes of democratization in the Arab World. This was evident in the two most important and influential research projects on the subject published in the 1980s. The first- O' Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead's influential comparative study of *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*- does not mention a single Arab country any where in its 710 pages.[7] Similarly, Diamond, Linz and Lipset's massive four-volume study of *Democratic Politics in the Developing World* explicitly excluded consideration of most of the Middle East, noting that "the Islamic countries of the Middle East and North Africa generally lack much previous democratic experience, and most appear to have little prospect of transition to even semi-democracy"[8]. Another influential scholar, Samuel Huntington, agreed, arguing "among Islamic countries,

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[6] *A Plan for the Development of Education in the Arab Countries: General and Higher Education and Scientific Research*/ALECSO. (2008). Department of Education; League of Arab States. Tunis : Alecso, p.9

[7] Guillermo O Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead, Eds.,(1986) Transition from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

[8] Larry Diamond, Juan Jinz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds.,1988 *Democracy in Developing Countries*, Vol.2, Africa, L.R Publishers Boulder, p. xix

particularly those in the Middle East, the prospects for democratic development seem low."[9]

With the collapse of the Soviet system and the end of the cold war came a wave of experiments in democratization around the world. Although the Arab world seems to some to be the major exception to this trend, even here there has been some cautious movement toward liberalization, if not democratization. The concept "civil society" has emerged as a key condition for democratization, and now -a number the most able political scientists of the Middle East are investigating whether the reality is emerging as well and why.[10]

Way back in 1964, Daniel Lenier in his *Passing of Traditional Society* epitomized a flawed phrase, Mecca or Mechanization, for the modernization of the Arab world projecting Islam as an impediment or incompatible with modernization. In the early 1960's modernization theories saw the Muslim world as facing an unpalatable choice: either a "neo-Islamic totalitarianism" intent on "resurrecting the past", or a "reformist Islam" that would open "the sluice gates and (be) swamped by the deluge." Since the 1980's, several modernization theories have come to accept that posting a sharp division between tradition and modernity oversimplifies a complex process of interaction in which religion and tradition coexist with economic development and the needs of a modern society.[11]

Several years later, Huntington revisited his same question. This time he concluded, "Islamic doctrines... contains elements that may be both congenial and uncongenial to democracy". Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, he was less sure that culture is so powerful in influence in democratization. As he explains it, "great cultural traditions like Islam...are highly complex bodies of ideas, beliefs, doctrines, assumptions and behavior

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[9] Samuel Huntington, 'Will More Countries become democratic?' *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 99, No. 2, Summer 1984, p.216

[10] Samuel P. Huntington, (1991), *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norms University of Oklahoma press.

[11] Werner, Myron, and Samuel, P. Huntington, (19870, *Understanding Political Development: An Analytic Study*, New York: Harper Collins.

patterns. Any major culture...has some elements that are compatible with democracy, just as both Protestantism and Catholicism have elements that are clearly undemocratic...The real question is which elements in Islam ...are favorable to democracy, and how and under what circumstances these can supersede the undemocratic aspects.[12] Survey research in Egypt confirms Huntington's later position that Islam is not a strong influence on political attitudes. In recent years, significant degrees of political liberalization have already been evident in a number of Arab sectors.

On the basis of civil and political rights of citizens, and personal dignity Arab political systems[13] can be discussed into following categories:

A) Countries with reasonable measure of freedom of association, authorizing political parties and permitting the establishments of various types of professional associations, class - based organizations and private societies, are Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria between 1988 and 1991, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen. Kuwait comes close to this group, although political parties have not been legally authorized, but different political groupings are known to exist and have openly contested legislative elections.

B) Countries where associations of various types do exist but are subject to heavy controls by a dominant party, a single party, or a mass organization like Libya, Syria, Iraq and Sudan and

C) Countries where freedom of association is not recognized whether for political parties, professional associations, or trade unions; Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, UAE.

These trends in democratic experience in the Arab world are the result of the growth of education and literacy more particularly among their middle classes.

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[12] Huntington, (1991). "Democracy's Third Waves", *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 2, No. 2, spring, pp. 28-30

[13] Ahmad Akber S & Hastings Donnan, 1994, *Islam Globalization and Post-Modernity*, Routlege, London; Akber Ahmad S,1999 *Islam Today: A short Introduction to the Muslim World*, I.B Tauris,London

In this backdrop, the exercise examined and tested the argument that it was education that provided the base for democratization and liberalization in Arab world in general and Kuwait in particular. The globalization environment opened up a competitive ambience wherein public sphere had different trajectory of its own, and is like the free market open to all. But the development of capitalist economy towards monopoly capitalism narrowed the space of the free market as also that of the public sphere—the space for a rational and the very forces that had brought it into existence destroyed universalistic politics distinct from both the economy and the state.

The present study documents a comprehensive account of the responses of education system in Kuwait to the challenges posed by the forces of democratization and liberalization in order to make an assessment of the degree of education and consequent march of democracy in the West Asian part of the Continent substantial locating countries with differences in terms of geographical size, population, development and education. Despite these differences what are common in these societies are their social complexities, Islamic ethos and political system although the nomenclature of their individual political structures differs in terms of processes of democratization.

Kuwait may conveniently be regarded as representative of West Asian societies in particular and the Third World in general as far as experiments in education, democracy and liberalization are concerned. It is beset with the problem of grappling with the forces of education as a factor in democratization vis-à-vis its indigenous Islamic, socio-cultural values. Despite this *nahdha* (awakening), the process of change and innovation is not yet complete, and the new patterns that have emerged are not yet final. They are part of a current of change of which it is only possible to indicate the general direction. While the old order is being gradually eroded an entirely new beginning is on the anvil that will determine the future scenario that is likely to emerge in the Arab world in its quest for modernization.

The study divided into five-chapter including conclusion has been descriptive and analytical in nature. The research design has been experimental with education being the

causal factor. Both primary and secondary data sources have also been utilized to understand the direction of change besides data combined in books, articles and government policies on the nature and status of education as a factor in the changing dynamics of democracy and the processes of democratization in Kuwait. The empirical data about Kuwait was gathered from various sources that included documentary analysis of reports, studies, and other documents. The documents were either gathered directly from the institutions or from official Web sites of the related bodies. The information was mainly taken from official Web sites of related agencies.

Chapter I of the thesis entitled *Education, Liberalization and Democratization in Arab World* dealt with the massive and substantive changes in the world economic, political, social and cultural foundations in Kuwait. The chapter is principally concerned with liberalization, democratization in Arab world in general and Kuwait in particular with education as a factor insofar as it relates to freedom and human rights. There is a wide interest in the universal trends of democratization and in the various schools of democracy. The literature on civil society and democratization has concentrated on simultaneous process of democratic transition and consolidation. The chapter examines the question of democratization and different patterns of political rule and evolution in the course of the past few decades. Democratic transitions require two developments; one involving the state, the other society. The masses looked for societal alternatives, and an increasingly democratic civil society emerged as a result. In the Arab world, however, the collapse of the state has not been nearly as total, with Arab world leaders retaining enough political, economic and cultural sources of legitimacy to be able to supplant much of the potential appeal that burgeoning civil society organisations might have. Invariably all Arab world states, however, have been able to maintain those corporatist arrangements through which they keep key social groups beholden to them, thus discouraging them from indirectly undermining their own interests.[14] Genuine democratization, if successful and sustained, can produce accountable, transparent, participatory, inclusive governance, instead of exclusive and repressive rule. Liberalization of political and economic systems throughout the region could support stability with education as an important factor. The

[14] See Chapter III of the thesis, which attempts to extensively deal with these issues.

infitah improved the lot of many in the upper and upper middle classes, their essentially dependent relationship with the state remained intact. The relationship of the state to society is based on a somewhat different premise in the oil monarchies. But the outcome- lack of societal pressure for change- is essentially the same. The corporatist arrangement in the oil monarchies has four central axioms. At the top sits the Royal family, which dominates and is often indistinguishable from the state. The Royal family is, in turn, supported by three key social groups: the clergy, whose close association with the state has resulted in the emergence of *al-Islam al-rasmi*; chiefs and notables from other tribes; and wealthy merchants and industrialists. None of these three groups is willing to challenge an implicit understanding with the state that has long ensured their economic prosperity, social affluence, political inclusion (or acceptance) and physical security. Those openly opposing the regime invariably come from outside these corporatist groups, with many being Islamist activists who question the credentials of the Royal family.

Formal independence came to the oil monarchies even later than in the rest of the Arab world (Kuwait in 1961). Nevertheless, the Royal families that eventually dominated the state had already achieved local control and prominence long before the departing British who recognised them as the rulers of the region. Upon the assumption of formal power, the Royal families based their control of the state on two powerful principles, one economic the other historical. Historically, the Royal families used the apparatus of the state to presents themselves as the `natural' outgrowth of tribal forces in society, the true representatives of the essence of their nation.[15] By so doing, they nullified any potential claims to rulership that other tribal chieftains or local notables might have had, thus eliminating an important source of possible opposition or, for that matter, societal independence. With varying degrees of success, they also sought to cultivate additional legitimacy on religious grounds, presenting themselves as the embodiment of religious piety and righteousness.[16] Although there have been widespread and frequent reports of

[15] The use of the term `natural state' here is inspired by Khaldoun Hasan al-Naqeeb, although he uses it in a specific historical context, lasting roughly from the 16 century to the 19 century. See, K. H. al-Naqeeb. (1990). *Society and State in the Gulf and Arab Peninsula*, London: Routledge, pp. 6-24.

[16] F. G. Gause. (1994). *Oil Monarchies: Domestic and Security Challenges in the Arab Gulf States*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, pp. 12-13.

corruption and immorality in the Gulf courts,[17] all the Royal families present highly pious and devout images of themselves to their populations. Fortunate to house Mecca and Medina in his territory, in 1986 Saudi Arabia' s King Fahd went so far as to adopt the title of `Custodian of Islam' s Holiest Mosques'.[18] Of course, a transition from autocratic and closed systems to open and democratic ones cannot be realized without pain. Despite the acknowledged (and experienced) problems of intermittent democratization pains, some authors believes that, certainly in the long term, democratization is a positive and worthwhile endeavor for all societies of the region. What is required is not the immediate (or even eventual) adoption of full-fledged Western-style liberal democracy, but a gradual process toward more participation in the political and economic life and governance of the country, in harmony with religious norms and teachings respected throughout society. The question is not whether democracy would be an asset for peace and justice in the Arab world, but which path toward a more participatory and accountable, political system should be embraced as one that would suit each society. Democratization can be defined as a progressive evolution of these components (accountability, elections, civil and political rights, and autonomous associations) in the context of, and conditioned by, state and political institutions, economic development, social divisions, civil society, political culture and ideas, and transnational and international engagements. The right to free association is fundamental to democracy. A measure of the liberalization of a regime is the degree to which free association is permitted without hindrance or restrictions, or control by the government.

The countries of the Arab world share with one another, and with Third World countries in general, certain common problems and aspirations. Education was viewed as "the master determinant of all aspects of change," as "the key that unlocks the door to modernization."[19] For those in political power, increasingly mass-based education ways

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[17] P. Wilson & D. Graham. (1994). *Saudi Arabia: The Coming Storm*, Armonk, NY: ME Sharpe, p. 56.
[18] *Ibid*, p. 61, In addition to `His Majesty' , the King dropped other titles, including `Light of the Kingdom' and `Object of One' s Self-Sacrifice' .
[19] Coleman, *Education and Political Development*, p. 3, and Frederick Harbison and Charles A. Myers (1964). *Education, Manpower, and Economic Growth: Strategies of Human Resource Development*, New York: McGraw-Hill, p. 181.

(and still is) a visible accomplishment having direct, if not fully understood, impact on the lives of people.

A motivating factor, leading in varying degrees to this change, is the move toward greater egalitarianism and the assumption that formal education is a major vehicle toward this end. Egalitarian orientations are tied to, or in some instances hidden by, an assumption which is more overriding for most Arab governments, namely, that development, modernity, and international prestige accompany educational growth. Hence, the educational sector is usually a major consideration in national development plans. There have occurred other noteworthy developments in the social, economic, and political sectors in many parts of the Arab world. For example, the face of many cities has changed not only in terms of modern building construction, but also through the increasingly powerful role of financial institutions, elaborate commercial activities, and complex networks of communication. Additionally, industry and agriculture have been "revolutionized" as a result of the increasing mechanization and application of modern technology. At the socio-political level, most Arab cities have witnessed democratization- a high degree of political mobilization resulting in an active political role for the urban worker and the expanding middle class. There has also been a decline in traditional orientations in virtually all institutional spheres.[20] In recent decades, Arab education has achieved substantial growth in quantitative terms, with enrollments and other indicators expanding dramatically, including for females. Arab students can choose from different educational systems.

For the past several decades, Kuwait has made great strides in its efforts to develop the society. These included creating a modern economic infrastructure and upgrading their educational system. This can be explained, to a great extent, by the introduction of modern schooling and the opening of several universities all over the state.

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[20] Baha Abu-Laban. (1970). 'Social Change and Local Politics in Sidon, Lebanon,' *Journal of Developing Areas*, Vol. 5, October, pp. 27-42, and "The National Character in the Egyptian Revolution," (1967), *Journal of Developing Areas*, Vol. 1, January, pp. 179-98.

Chapter II entitled *Kuwait: Education, Democratisation and Development* brought out the changing nature of the state, civil society and the conviction that human capital is the basic foundation in the fulfillment of development tasks, and that education is the corner stone in the preparation, training and mobilization of the abilities of human capital, in order to meet national and regional needs. The pursuit of knowledge is a religious duty. This, of course, raises the question, 'what sort of knowledge?' Muslim scholars have been at pains to emphasize that this does not license the pursuit of any kind of knowledge. Knowledge in Islam is subject to two major constraints. The first relates to its religious origin. The Holy Qur'an makes it clear that knowledge is a characteristic of God Himself and that all knowledge comes from Him.[21] This applies whether the knowledge is revealed (naqliyya) or humanly constructed ('aqliyya) and it means that knowledge must be approached reverently and in humility, for there cannot be any 'true' knowledge that is in conflict with religion and divine revelation, only ignorance. The second relates to its purpose. There is no notion in Islam of the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. Seyyed Hossein Nasr points out that in Arabic 'to know' ultimately means 'to be transformed by the very process of knowing'.[22] Ibn Khaldun pours scorn on the man 'who knows about tailoring but does not know tailoring'[23] and al-Ghazali says, Be sure that knowledge alone is no support.... If a man reads a hundred thousand scientific subjects and learns them but does not act upon them, his knowledge is of no use to him, for its benefit lies only in being used.[24] Like money, knowledge is not to be accumulated for its own sake but must be put to use. And the appropriate use for knowledge from a Muslim perspective is to help people to acknowledge God, to live in accordance with Islamic law and to fulfil the purposes of God's creation. Knowledge which does not serve these purposes may be considered useless. All this implies a concept of knowledge that is very different from dominant western concepts. Secondly, the traditions (*ahaddith*) of the Prophet Muhammad provide further insight into Islamic education. One hadfth (in al-Bukhari's collection) reminds believers that 'seeking for knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim

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[21] Q. 35:28.

[22] Quoted in Eaton, H. G. (1982) 'Knowledge and the sacred', *The Islamic Quarterly,* Vol. 26, No. 3 , p. 141.

[23] Ibn Khaldun (1967) *The Muqaddimah,* F. Rosenthal, Trans., original work published 1381) (vol. 3), Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, p. 354 ff.

[24] Quoted in al-Taftazani, A.-W. al-G. (1986) 'Islamic education: its principles and aims', *Muslim Education Quarterly,* Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 70.

man and woman', another (in the collections of Tirmidhi and Darimi) says that 'he who goes forth in search of knowledge is in the way of Allah till he returns', while others (of less certain authenticity, but quoted, for example, by Bahonar, 2004)[25] say 'Seek knowledge, even as far as China' and 'Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave'. Some of these sayings have far-reaching implications: learning is a lifelong matter, it can be pursued outside the Islamic world and it is an equal obligation for men and women. Thirdly, though little of it could strictly be called 'philosophy of education', there was a substantial amount of writing in the high period of Islamic civilization that discussed educational issues generally. Both Nasir al-Din Tusi's Akhlag-i-Naseri and Ibn Maskuya's Taharat al-A'arag contain detailed discussions of moral education and other educational issues. Al-Ghazali's Fatihat al-'Ulfm is perhaps the closest to an early introduction to educational theory. In al-Muqaddimah, the great historian and sociologist Ibn Khaldun outlines the aims of education, the curriculum and the skills of teaching and also provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of Islamic knowledge. He follows the by now standard bifurcation of knowledge into that which is revealed (naqliyya or transmitted sciences, such as theology and jurisprudence) and that which is discovered ('aqliyya or intellectual sciences, such as medicine and mathematics).[26] Other texts, including Siyasat- Namah by Nizam-al-Mulk and Ghulistan and Bustan by Sa'di, examine topics like education, teaching, learning, youth, love and devotion. The Treatises (Rasd'il) of the Ikhwan al-Safa include discussions of psychological and philosophical issues that are of particular interest to educators.[27] This list, though far from complete, indicates something of the breadth of interest among Muslims in educational principles and practice. The tradition of broad scholarship exemplified in these writers has continued up to the present day.

In Islam, therefore, there is no question of individuals being encouraged through education to work out for themselves their own religious faith or to subject it to detached rational investigation at a fundamental level; the divine revelation expressed in the *sharfa*

[25] Bahonar, M. J. (2004) *The goals of Islamic education*, available online at: home.swipnet.se/islam/articles/goals.htm (accessed 7 June 2009).
[26] Cheddadi, A. (1994) Ibn Khaldun (A.D.1332-1406/A.H. 732-808), Prospects, 24(1/2), 7-19.
[27] Tibawi, A. L. (1959) Some educational terms in Rasa'il Ikhwan as-Safa, Islamic Quarterly, 5(1/2), 55-60.

provides them with the requisite knowledge of truth and falsehood, right and wrong, and the task of individuals is to come to understand this knowledge and exercise their free will to choose which path to follow. From a liberal perspective, the notion of free will in Islam is thus an unsophisticated one, involving simply the choice to accept or reject the complete package of beliefs, and contrasts sharply with the liberal notion of personal autonomy. Kuwait allows, let alone encourages civil society to thrive and prepare the population, political parties, and movements to contribute constructively to eventual democratization. The question analysed whether education would be an asset for democracy, peace and justice in Kuwait, but which path toward a more participatory and accountable, political system should be embraced as one that would suit the society. There is an imminent need for the process of liberalization that gives a special consideration and a top priority to the building of knowledge capacity. The closeness of education to development is so intimate that it has become impossible to map development without keeping a very big space for its educational component. If development is a process of continuous growth of societal aim and goals towards civility and human fulfillment, then similarly education is also a process of continuous change and enrichment of its goals and methods in order to make such development possible. For that symbiotic relationship between development and education to be meaningful, both have to be societal related, to be a response to pivotal historic call, and, therefore, be fairly specific and particular. We are then speaking of democratization, liberalization and education of Kuwaiti society and people, at this tragic stage of historical march. Striking a balance between contemporary interests and traditional values is an issue that is moving to the fore in the education sector, as increased privatisation and a growing population reshape schools in Kuwait. While Kuwaitis expect an education that will prepare them to go to universities abroad, there is a growing fear that Westernisation is eroding Kuwaiti identity in the classroom. Presiding over this debate is Nouria Al Sbeih, Kuwait's first female minister of education, tasked with re-energising the country's educational system in the face of increased regional competition and shifting societal demands. Private schooling is available in Kuwait but the Government subsidy on it has been removed.[28] Most of the challenges facing the private sector are similar to those found in other Arab

[28] Al Yahya, Mohammad A. (1993). *Kuwait: Fall and Rebirth*, London: Kegan Paul International, p.120.

countries with regard to capturing market share and increasing profitability.[29] Within the Arab countries, the percentage of children accessing kindergartens varies greatly (1% in Yemen and 99% in Kuwait). This is mainly due to the difference in wealth and in the ability to build and finance such institutions. The sex typing of fields of study is a worldwide phenomenon,[30] yet it varies between countries. For example, 51.6% of engineering students are women in Kuwait, compared with 3.3% in Switzerland and Japan (UNESCO 1995). Looking at the record, the MDGs goal of achieving universal primary education has, for all intents and purposes, been achieved, nearly ten years ahead of time.[31] Education is the primary prerequisite for the process of democratization based on liberalized policies of the state.

In Kuwait, where in 1981 a sweeping law made literacy compulsory for everyone aged 14 to 44, rewarded them with job incentives, made it illegal to hire or promote an illiterate and threatened to sue those who refuse to participate or fail to attend classes regularly. Judging gender equality by the relevant ratios in education and literacy, Kuwait was able to achieve the MDG on gender equality by the year 2004 as required. Women represent 70% of university graduates, and a few hold relatively senior non-political posts in the state bureaucracy. In June, 2005 the prime minister appointed Masouma al-Mubarak Minister of Planning and Administrative Development. She is the first female cabinet minister in the nation's history.

State-sanctioned and -supported voluntary associations are among the primary venues of civil society in modern Kuwait.[32] Voluntary associations also are important because they provide alternatives to the family as bases for mobilizing citizens according to their interests and affinities. Voluntary associations are vital components of Kuwaiti political

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[29] Al-Kazemi, A. and Ali, A. (2002), 'Managerial problems in Kuwait', *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 366–75.

[30] Moore, K.M. (1987). 'Women's Access and Opportunity in Higher Education', *Comparative Education*, Vol. 23, pp. 23-34.

[31] *Kuwait: Country Report on the Millennium Developmental Goals: Achievements and Challenges*, (2005). UNDP, Kuwait, State of Kuwait: Ministry of Planning (MOP-UNDP), pp.7-8.

[32] Al-Mughni, Haya (1993) *Women in Kuwait: The Politics of Gender*. London: Saqi Books; Ghabra, Shafeeq (1991) 'Voluntary Associations in Kuwait: The Foundation of a New System?' *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 45, no. 2, pp. 199–215.

and social life. They are theoretically and, to varying extents in practice, more – or at least differently – democratic than *diwaniyyas*, meetings usually held in private homes. The social structure of Kuwaiti society has been rapidly became comparable to most Western States today: the education and health services, social security provisions, utilities and public employment which were introduced in Kuwait compare with the most modern systems in the world.

It was the aim of this chapter to oversee and investigate the steps followed by Kuwait -as a model in adopting education as a process of democratization and liberalization under the rubrics of established Islamic ethos.

Chapter III of the thesis entitled *Regional Influences on Experiments in Political Liberalization* focused on types and levels of political liberalization. Political liberalization and political democratization are two processes that must be distinguished from each other. Whereas democratization, with a focus on popular political participation and elite accountability, requires political liberalization (the promotion of individual freedoms and rights), the latter can happen without the former. Although political liberalization can be witnessed throughout much of the Arab world, movement toward genuine democratization, enshrined and consolidated in both constitutional arrangements and political practices, is rare. The chapter explored the extent of genuine progress toward democratization and the degree to which it has in fact been eluding the region despite the urgency with which true change must be pursued if the countries of the region are to overcome the "tremendous challenges . . . in achieving the levels of human development 'with education' (sic) that only good governance, including its political aspects, can ensure." Professional associations, like syndicates of lawyers, physicians, journalists, artists, university professors, and teachers may enjoy a credibility that political parties do not have anymore. Professional associations could be entrusted with the task of political transformation and democratization because they appear less corrupt and rigidly organized than political parties. In all countries where democratization- as a process- has begun, professional associations are asserting themselves.

In the MENA region, information disclosure acts leave much to be desired and NGO laws are restrictive, but there are signs that things are changing for the better. Civil society is now playing a more active role in several areas, including education. Newspapers, television shows, and the Internet regularly feature education debates, sometimes with scathing analysis of government efforts. Also, a number of independent institutes and academics are conducting and disseminating research on education issues.[33]

Nevertheless, most Arab states have proven unable to meet the needs of all students desiring to pursue their goals because of dramatic increases in student enrollment unaccompanied by sufficient resources. Confirming this, the 1998 Beirut Declaration of the Arab Regional Conference on Higher Education stated "higher education in the Arab States is under considerable strain, due to high rates of population growth and increasing social demand for higher education, which lead states and institutions to increase student enrollment, often without adequate allocated financial resources."[34]

Moreover, faced with the challenges of providing flexible enrollment and lifelong learning availability, Arab higher education institutions have not been able to meet the new demands and needs of their societies. Thus, the urgent need for in-depth reform of university structures is evident. In view of this, the Beirut Declaration calls for harnessing modern information and communication technologies to "contribute in the provision of courses and degree-awarding programs through multiple and advanced means, thus breaking through the traditional barriers of space and time."[35] In responding to what is mentioned above, Arab countries have adopted radically new visions that would prevent Arab societies from lagging behind other socio-economically advanced nations.

The shape of Arab politics is rapidly evolving thanks to regional and international changes and internal developments that have been accelerated since the end of the second

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[33] MENA DEVELOPMENT REPORT (2008). *The Road Not Traveled Education Reform in the Middle East and North Africa,* The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank: Washington DC, pp.201-202.
[34] UNESCO (1998). Higher Education in the twenty-first century Vision and Action . *World Conference on Higher Education, volume 1, Final Report , October 5-9, 1998* , Paris: UNESCO, p.44.
[35] *Ibid,* p.45.

Gulf war. Arab regimes are now more aware of popular dissatisfaction and the support by several Arab regimes for the US war campaign has only put more pressure on the ruling regimes. Symbolic and superficial changes have been introduced in most Arab countries. State-sponsored councils and committees have been sprouting at a rapid rate in many countries, including in the Gulf region where identification with Shari'ah was all that the regimes were willing to submit to. Regular elections in Jordan, Kuwait and Lebanon have resulted in a changed political structure.

The past decades saw Kuwait making great strides to develop and modernize. These included creating a modern economic infrastructure and upgrading their educational system. Amid growing discontent with the public school system, to which over 90% of Saudi students attend, the private school industry is seen as a growth industry, as is the e-learning industry, which is expected to hit $125m in value in 2008. One private university, Alfaisal University in Riyadh, hopes to cultivate valuable connections to the international scientific world through a new research agreement with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Lack of interest in science and engineering fields among tertiary students contributes to the growing skills gap in the Kingdom, a trend the government is aiming to reverse.[36] In October 2008, Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah launched the construction of the first women-only university in Saudi Arabia. The Princess Noura Bint Abdelrahman University for Girls will offer courses in subjects like medicine, pharmacy, management, computer sciences and languages that women find difficulty in studying in normal universities where strict gender segregation is enforced. The country of 25 million has state schools for girls and some private colleges for women.[37]

This can be explained, to a great extent, by the introduction of modern schooling and the opening of several universities all over the countries. This revolution in the quantitative levels of education however, suffers from qualitative deficiencies. The types of academic learning and technical training are not geared toward the requirements of the job market.

[36] http://www.oxfordbusinessgroup.com/publication.asp?country=44
[37] http://www.reuters.com/article/lifestyleMolt/idUSTRE49S65L20081029

In other words, there is a mismatch between the educational system, where the main focus is on arts, humanities and religious studies in order to preserve traditional culture, and the labor force, where the need is for technical and managerial skills in order to achieve a higher level of integration in the inter- national economic system. This contradiction between the desire to preserve traditional culture and at the same time aspire to be part of the global revolution in information technology is likely to endure for some time. It is further complicated by the slow change in societies' attitude toward women's status and role. There have been significant achievements but much more is still desired. There is a fundamental need to change the quality of education, to accommodate technical training and focus more on science and less on humanities.

While the social structure of Kuwaiti society has been rapidly nearing comparable to most Western States today: the education and health services, social security provisions, utilities and public employment which were introduced in Kuwait compare with the most modern systems in the world. Each State provided its citizens with these services as guaranteed rights; for instance, the State is pledged constitutionally to provide every individual with a job appropriate to his qualifications. The guaranteed job concept is an Islamic social concept. Education and processes of democratization are intertwined and interrelated. It is safe, therefore, to conclude from the foregoing that Kuwait as well as the other Arab Gulf States is witnessing a rapid return to the traditional Islamic Shari'a, as a result of many important factors internally and externally. Kuwait is to be considered the leader among the Gulf States in returning to Islamic law of which education is a cardinal principle through the adoption of some Islamic Laws and their implementation and application since the beginning of the 1980s. It was the aim of the chapter II to oversee and investigate the steps followed by Kuwait -as a model in adopting education as a process of democratization and liberalization under the rubrics of established Islamic ethos.

Chapter IV entitled *Kuwait's Tryst with Democracy* explored the problems which democratization poses to the traditional political system of Kuwait and its tryst with democracy as a result of the discovery of oil. The chapter discussed the effect of the

consequent changes upon its political authority and upon the state's traditional political institutions. Next it analyzed the welfare state with education as a factor established in the aftermath of the oil boom, with special attention to the enormous socio-economic changes in context of liberalization which have swept Kuwait. The chapter also analyzed the weaknesses affecting, and challenges facing, Kuwait's political system, balancing this assessment with a consideration of more positive factors, which have led to the restoration of parliamentary life after each period of dissolution. Kuwait experienced the fifth dissolution in its parliamentary experience.[38] On 3 July 1999, elections were held with 288 candidates competing for the 50 parliamentary seats. On June 29, 2006, for the first time universal suffrage was in force. It saw the participation of women in national elections. It is estimated that there are around 340,000 eligible to vote in Kuwait of which 57 per cent are women; the turnout was 35 per cent. In 2006 elections, there were 27 women candidates among the 249 in the electoral fray. But the repeated dissolution of Parliament raises many questions about democracy in Kuwait, which is located in a region that does not look favorably on democratic reforms. The Emir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah dissolved the National Assembly of Kuwait on 18 March 2009 over accusations of supposed abuse of democracy and threats to political stability. An early parliamentary election was held in Kuwait on 16 May 2009, the country's third in a three-year period. It also raises a legitimate question concerning the reason(s) behind the uniqueness of Kuwait, with its relatively open society. The chapter discussed the democracy in practice in Kuwait and discussed the major challenges facing democracy in Kuwait. It explored the strengths and weaknesses of a rare continuing democracy in the Arab world, despite the limitations. The roots of participatory politics in Kuwait date back to its establishment as a society more than two centuries ago. The basic agreement among the immigrant families was to have a ruler who would consult with the people over important issues, while they supported him financially. The system was undermined by the sudden ability of the ruler to be financially independent following the discovery of oil, and the great interest shown by the external superpowers. After independence in

[38] For an account of the two previous dissolutions of 1976 and 1986, see Jill Crystal. (1992). *Kuwait: The Transformation of an Oil State*, Boulder: Westview, pp. 91-123, and Ghanim al-Najjar (1996). *Madkhal li-Masirat al-Tatawwur al-Siyasifi al-Kuwayt (Introduction to Kuwaiti Political Development)*, Kuwait: Qurtas Publishing, second edition.

1961, society was transformed from the traditional form of participatory governing, to a more institutionalized democratic process. Many factors contributed to the transformation. Internally, the politically active and open merchant community were able to cultivate a cordial relationship with a benevolent ruler before he came to power. It was the country's good fortune that he ('Abdallah al-Salim) ruled for 15 years, the critical first years of the oil era. In addition, the activity of younger political groupings, and the country's increasing wealth, helped achieve the transformation. Externally, changes on the international scene, especially the British decision to withdraw from the Gulf, were important factors. The emergence of regional powers, with their own rivalry for regional supremacy, gave the small independent state room to maneuver and choose its own political system. With the death of the Amir in 1965, and the subsequent shift of the balance of power in the government's favor, coupled with a sharp decline in the influence of merchants and political groupings, the democratic process became the first victim. This was demonstrated in the unconstitutional dissolutions of Parliament. But social change, through mass education and economic opportunities, opened the door for new socio-political forces to affect the process in the direction of a more open society. The situation reached its height with the establishment of the pro-democracy movement in 1989, which took to the streets calling for the restoration of constitutional rule. This was helped along by the change in the international order brought about by the end of the Cold War, and the impetus toward more open societies. The Iraqi invasion of August 1990, and the liberation of Kuwait by an international coalition, was a decisive moment for restoring democracy in the country.

Kuwait's successful tryst with democracy and extension of franchise to its women folk heralded a new era in democratic politics in the Gulf region and Arab world. It is interesting to note that women participation and contest in General elections in Kuwait have considerably risen during the last few years is an indicator of the fact that growth in education correspondingly leads to a growth in democratic activities.

ROLE OF EDUCATION IN LIBERALIZATION AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN THE ARAB WORLD: A STUDY OF KUWAIT

PH.D THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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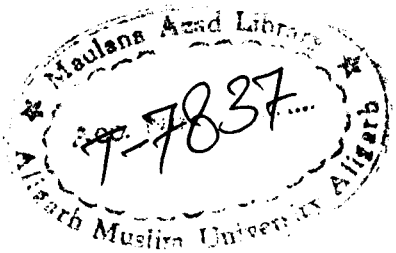
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Dr. Mohammad Abid
Supervisor

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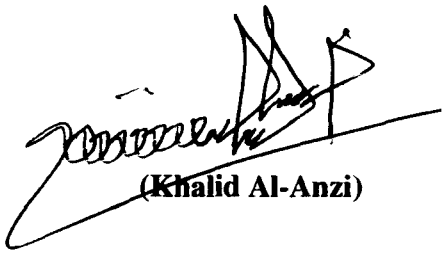
This is to certify that the present study on **"ROLE OF EDUCATION IN LIBERALIZATION AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN THE ARAB WORLD: A STUDY OF KUWAIT"** is based on my own research work under the supervision of Dr. Mohammad. Abid. I also declare that this thesis has not been submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy or any other Degree in this or any other University.



(Khalid Al-Anzi)

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Khaled Al Anzi

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

A number of factors complicate the task of providing a 25-year overview of education, democratization and liberalization studies of the Arab world, and in assessing the state of this field of study today. The first is that the study of democratization in the Arab world in general and Kuwait in particular does not, and should not, stand alone: it has to be connected up to wider theoretical studies of the phenomena of democracy, liberalization and democratization. Throughout the thesis, varying definitions of the term "democracy" are used and discussed.[1] This reflects the diversity of approaches to evaluate the progress made in the region toward democratization, and it explains the nature of optimism and pessimism about the region's prospects for both democratization and resulting peace dividends. Such disagreement is of course not unique. As Schmitter argues, "[a]cross time and space – not to mention culture and class – opinions have differed concerning what institutions and rules are to be considered democratic . . . [while] . . .[t]he concrete institutions and rules which have been established in different 'democratic' countries have similarly differed."[2] Recognizing these differences in definition and expectation and accepting the fact that there is more than one "ideal" model of democracy – in a universal but also, much more significantly, in a regional context – are key to peaceful relations among nascent democracies and to relations between them and established democracies. As Schmitter further notes, "[g]iven the positive connotation which the term [democracy] has acquired, each country tends to claim that the way its institutions and rules are structured is the most democratic . . . [while] . . . [t]he 'others,' especially

[1] For some seminal writings on the processes of democratization, see Robert A. Dahl (1971). *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead (1986). eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press; Robert A. Dahl (1989) *Democracy and Its Critics*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset (1990). eds., *Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers; Samuel Huntington (1991) *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press; Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, (1996). *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press; and Larry Diamond (1999). *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. For a very recent discussion, see *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no. 3, July 2002, on the theme of 'Debating the Transition Paradigm.'

[2] Philippe C. Schmitter, 'Some Basic Assumptions about the Consolidation of Democracy,' in Takashi Inoguchi, Edward Newman, and John Keane (1998). eds., *The Changing Nature of Democracy*, Tokyo: United Nations University Press, p. 32.

one's enemies and competitors, are accused of having some inferior type of democracy or another kind of regime altogether."[3] Such arrogance breeds resentment, which, in the long run, breeds violence. In particular, the application, experience, and debate surrounding the validity of the democratic peace are thus in no small measure highly dependent on the compatibility of definitions and expectations of what constitutes a democracy, as well as on a thorough understanding and appreciation of the vulnerabilities generated by the transition process from autocracy to democracy.[4] A second factor concerns the time-span covered. Democratization has been a major theme in Arab world studies for only about twenty years. Although earlier theoretical literature is relevant to the issue, there is no body of work on democratization in the Arab world which can be traced through the 25-year period. "When will Arab world countries democratize?" is the normative question that guided the literature on regime change in the Arab world during the 1990s. Since significant political changes but no systemic transitions have occurred, this question needs reformulation: what accounts for the persistence of Arab authoritarianism? Escaping thus from the teleological tunnel permits the identification of two major developments. The first is an oscillation between controlled education, political liberalizations and deliberalizations, and the second consists of five areas of change within regimes: legitimation, elites, institution building, co-optation, and regimes' reactions to external influences. The second trend is particularly crucial for understanding the durability of authoritarianism in the Arab world. Finally, the academic study of democratization in the Arab world can not be dissociated from the democratization policies pursued by Western governments. Much of the academic work on democratization in the Arab world has been policy-related: geared to recommending to Western governments how they can help promote the process. The relevance of this

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[3] *Ibid.*

[4] On this discussion, see, for instance, Rudolph J. Rummel, 'Democracies Don't Fight Democracies,' available at http://www.peacemagazine.org/9905/rummel.htm; Miriam Fendius Elman (1997). ed., *Paths to Peace: Is Democracy the Answer?* Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press; Thomas Schwartz and Kiran Skinner (1999). 'The Myth of Democratic Pacifism,' *Hoover Digest*, No. 2; Spencer R. Weart (1997). *Never at War: Why Democracies Will Not Fight One Another*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller (1996). eds., *Debating the Democratic Peace*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; Torak Barkawi and Mark Laffey (2001). eds., *Democracy, Liberalism, and War: Rethinking the Democratic Peace Debate*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers; and Paul H. Huth (2003). *The Democratic Peace and Territorial Conflict in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

stems from the increased willingness of Western governments, over the past decade, to play an active role in promoting liberal democracy in other parts of the world. An assessment of the development of education, liberalization and democratization studies, therefore, needs to take into account the relationship between the academic and governmental agendas, and the degree to which its promotion in the Arab world in general and Kuwait in particular has in fact been a useful policy to pursue. This thesis will attempt to examine, first, the main contributions which have been made to the understanding of education, liberalization democratization in the Arab world and Kuwait in particular. An attempt will then be made to identify inadequacies in the existing literature. Finally, it will be suggested that the international community, both academic and governmental, could achieve more for the peoples of the Arab world by changing the emphasis of its current concerns. Less stress should be placed on the generalized concept of liberal democracy, and a closer focus should be placed on an extensive yet clearly-defined set of characteristics which comprise Islamic ethos, education and good governance.

The thesis addresses a number of key issues that will determine failure or success in establishing sustainable democratization efforts in the region. Peace and stability, both domestic and interstate, and both negative and positive, are necessary for democratization processes to take hold. Simultaneously, democratization is necessary for peace and stability to unfold and, most importantly, to endure. Attempts to pursue peace without democratization, or democratization without peace, exacerbate instead of reduce the prospects of tension and war within and between the countries of the Arab world.

Political reform in the Arab world has thus far taken place through a process of formal regime-oppositions, negotiations, and discussions whose content, scope, and timing have been controlled by ruling elites. The basic goal has been to promote a sufficient level of political openness in civil society, media, and the political-electoral arena for opposition elites to let off steam, without affording them the opportunity or capacity to undermine the institutional, legal, and informal props that sustain regime control of the political system.

The top-down nature of this process is by no means unique to the Arab world. On the contrary, regime-initiated liberalizations have been a common feature of regime transitions in many parts of the globe. But what distinguishes the Arab cases is the failure (or perhaps unwillingness) of civil society groups and political parties to take advantage of opportunities to press for genuine democratization as opposed to regime managed liberalization. Arab leaders have been active in working toward a regional response to the crisis as well. At the January, 2009 *Arab Economic, Developmental and Social Summit*, held in Kuwait, they agreed to work together on consolidating close Arab relations and common goals, especially as pertains to promoting social and economic development, including in the areas of empowerment of youth and women, and in addressing food and water issues. Moreover, the Kuwait Declaration, issued on January 20th, called for cooperation to enhance the ability of Arab countries to confront the repercussions of the international crisis, and to participate in international efforts directed at securing international financial stability.[5]

The absence of opposition effectiveness cannot be attributed solely to the coercive capacity of Arab regimes, or to their distribution of direct and indirect rents to clients. Hand in hand with such sticks and carrots has been a political legacy of personal, institutional, and ideological fragmentation within opposition circles on one side, and popular apathy and depoliticization on the other. Moreover, and partly as a consequence of such internal constraints, opposition leaders have often grudgingly accepted meager benefits from liberalized autocracies over the unknowns of challenging the status quo. The theoretical assumption that democracy is an important prerequisite for international peace, because democratic regimes tend not to fight other democracies. According to this hypothesis, the presence of democratic regimes throughout the Arab world would be the guarantor of stable peace and would, in addition to creating more just and participatory states, effectively prevent interstate conflict in the future. However, democracies do fight non-democratic regimes, so the presence of only one "spoiler," one autocratic regime, would severely limit the opportunities for regional democratic peace and a regional

[5] *Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries*. (2009).UNDP-Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS): New York, pp.107-08

security community. The application of the democratic peace hypothesis in the Arab world can be little more than an academic exercise because few, if any, of the countries in the region are well-functioning, full-fledged democracies.

Yet in the last two or so years, opposition elites have begun to tire of the informal consensus that has sustained the *modis vivendi* within oppositions and between oppositions and state. This shift is partly a consequence of the political frustrations born of state managed liberalization. As noted before, liberalized autocracies tend to cycle back and forth between periods of political liberalization and deliberalization. The process of retreat to greater state control and interference—if not outright repression—is usually provoked by the gains that mainstream Islamist forces acquire under the umbrella of liberalized autocracy. Using networks of preacher-ideologues and mosques, mainstream Islamists have out-organized their non-Islamist competitors to emerge as the only movements and/or parties that have a mass, organic constituency. Emboldened by electoral gains, Islamist leaders have frequently violated ambiguously defined lines of state-tolerated dissent, thus provoking crackdowns from regime hardliners.

Frustrated by the limits of state-managed liberalization, and particularly by the periodic retraction of liberties granted by regimes, both Islamists and non-Islamist leaders have begun talking about ways to cooperate in an effort to step beyond the limits of liberalized autocracy. Granted, these discussions are at an early stage, but they represent a potential learning process that might invigorate oppositions that have traditionally suffered from internal weakness and division.

All rulers need legitimacy and the consent of their citizens to stay in power. Thus, they, on their own or in response to pressure from citizens, may initiate constitutional changes to make education a right for all citizens. They may decide to decentralize the provision of education to subnational levels, as a first step toward democratization, and as a way of allowing citizens to exercise some influence over education policies. And they may change the rules governing information disclosure and make collected information about school performance, national and international test scores, and resource allocation available to the public. These decisions commit the executive branch to meeting certain

objectives and/or provide citizens with mechanisms for expressing themselves.[6] The question is whether Arab world and in particular Kuwait has attempted to do this. Consider first the provisions related to education in the constitutions of some Arab countries. This is one area where most nations in the region have made clear commitments, although the nature of these commitments varies. The constitutions of Algeria, Egypt and Syria not only guarantee the right of education to all citizens, but also to be provided free of charge. Jordan and Lebanon's constitutions also guarantee the right of education for all, but no commitment is made that education will be provided by the state for free. These constitutional commitments were made typically in the wake of independence from colonial powers and have put pressure on governments to deliver. In recent years, however, most countries are increasingly relying on the private sector for the provision of education and private tutoring is mushrooming, both of which are turning free education gradually into a "false entitlement." Next, consider decentralization. It was argued that a carefully designed decentralization to local states could empower citizens if it is paired with free local elections and representation of citizens on local councils. If not, decentralization could erode public accountability. It further reduces the consistency of education policies across states while giving citizens no effective voice. Thus, decentralization is a potentially useful instrument for enhancing public accountability, but its usefulness depends on the way it is designed and implemented. In the Arab world, more and more countries are increasingly adopting programs of decentralization of decision making to sub national governments.

The delegation of responsibilities covers many areas of service delivery, including education. However, there are no systematic assessments of the effectiveness of decentralization in the region. Thus, we cannot ascertain its value from the point of view of enhancing public accountability. Finally, consider information, which is fundamental to public accountability. Indeed, it is almost impossible to see how accountability could be enhanced in the absence of relevant information about different aspects of education. Even if the media were fully independent, NGO associations and advocacy groups unrestricted, and citizens able to express themselves freely, the lack of information would prevent them from holding politicians accountable for outcomes. The examples of how information can change policies are numerous. From the World Development Report

[6] When voice cannot be expressed within an institutional framework, it is sometimes expressed in an extralegal manner (e.g., student demonstrations, protests by parents by not sending their kids to school).

(WDR) on making services reach the poor, making the information available about the resources allocated to schools and how much actually reached them in Uganda caused a strong reaction from citizens and led to a shift in favor of schools. In the MENA region, information disclosure acts leave much to be desired and NGO laws are restrictive, but there are signs that things are changing for the better. Civil society is now playing a more active role in several areas, including education. Newspapers, television shows, and the Internet regularly feature education debates, sometimes with scathing analysis of government efforts. Also, a number of independent institutes and academics are conducting and disseminating research on education issues.[7]

During the 1950s and 1960s, after independence, most Arab countries have struggled to develop systems of higher education that would enable their societies to build an educational system that would flourish and grow. The search to develop such educational systems was consistent with a global trend in which the expansion of higher education had been the most important single post war trend worldwide.[8] Arab governments have rapidly established a great number of universities in recent decades. In 1950, there were no more than ten universities scattered across the region, whereas today, there are more than 200 higher education providers.[9] At the same time, Arab states have, as never before, witnessed a remarkable increase in enrollment rates in higher education institutions. This increase has resulted from a growing public demand for education, an enlarged population, and the governments' commitments to make higher education as accessible as possible.

Policymakers, social planners, and external evaluators are often, and rightly so, concerned with the clarity of government goals regarding education. Five- or ten-year plans regarding education can be impressive blueprints from which to evaluate a

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[7] MENA DEVELOPMENT REPORT (2008). *The Road Not Traveled Education Reform in the Middle East and North Africa,* The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank: Washington DC, pp.201-202.

[8] Samoff, J. (2003). 'Institutionalizing international influence'. In Arnove, R. F. & Torres, C. A. (Eds.). *Comparative education: the dialectic of the global and local,* (2nd ed.). New York: Rowman & Littlefield publishers, pp.52-91.

[9] UNESCO (2003). Higher education in the Arab Region, 1998-2003, Meeting of higher education partners. *A document prepared by UNESCO regional bureau for education in the Arab States, 23-25 June 2003.* Paris: UNESCO.

country's progress, but stated government goals are not sufficient for evaluating the effectiveness of the educational system. There may, for example, be class differences in the perception of the educational system. The working class may view universal education as a mechanism for personal upward mobility into white-collar jobs. In contrast, elite views of education goals may be quite different, and the intentions of power holders need to be considered. Is education to them a mechanism for citizenship training, humanistic development, or job/career training?

Not only may there be divergent perceptions of goals between segments of a society, but "external" evaluators may reflect cultural bias and misunderstanding. Although socioeconomic development is a multilinear rather than a unilinear process, involving different forms of adaptive change and different combinations of traits, many Western scholars have tended to assume that the industrialization and modernization of Third World countries would lead to essentially Western patterns.[10] These views ignore the fact that in a given developing country goals may be interpreted or implemented in such a way as to produce a new version of modernization which is adapted to the country's history and cultural traditions. Indeed, such has been the experience with Japan. In short, differences between the ways in which goals are perceived, interpreted, and implemented may influence the way in which formal education impinges on other aspects of development.

The functional contribution of formal education to development must be examined within the broader context of change in other institutional areas. Education cannot be examined in terms of enrollment statistics alone. Since societal institutions are interconnected, the "isolated" development of one may not only have far-ranging repercussions on other institutional areas, but it may also have intrainstitutional ramifications. These ramifications may actually be detrimental to the goals which were being sought by rapid development in the first place. There is a need for wider institutional context in

[10] See, for example, S. N. Eisenstadt (1966). *Modernization: Protest and Change*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall. For a critique of the Western-oriented position, see Sharon McIrvin Abu-Laban (1974). *Social Bonds in the Urban Industrial Setting: A Meta- sociological Analysis*, Ph.D. diss., University of Alberta.

attempting to examine the developmental impact of the educational system. In the enthusiasm to cite education as a catalyst in democratization, liberalization, and socioeconomic development, it is sometimes overlooked that education can also effectively preserve tradition and the status quo. For that to occur, careful planning and coordination are essential.

Factors contributing to industrialization in a given society may be distinct from those contributing to social modernity. Some Arab countries and some of the Gulf oil-producing states, are industrializing in the absence of a "corresponding" progress toward social modernity. These examples illustrate the problem in assuming that socioeconomic development can be achieved through basically a repetition of Western pat-terms, or that particular personality attributes, more or less speculatively associated with modernity, are a precondition of development. In examining the modernizing influence of education, it is necessary to consider the role which alternate or supportive experiences play. For example, the democratizing, liberalizing, modernizing potential of rural-urban migration, mass media exposure, voluntary associations, factory participation, and literacy or adult education programs may reinforce or detract from the educational experience. Clearly, the meshing of these alternate modernizing experiences with educational goals needs to be considered. The factors which identified above draw attention to some neglected issues which should be taken into account in examining the relationship between formal education and liberalization, democratization and overall socioeconomic development. The modernizing potential of education tends to be circumscribed by these and similar socio-cultural factors. To disregard the influence of such factors may perpetuate unrealistic expectations regarding the developmental impact of education. Nevertheless, most Arab states have proven unable to meet the needs of all students desiring to pursue their goals because of dramatic increases in student enrollment unaccompanied by sufficient resources. Confirming this, the 1998 Beirut Declaration of the Arab Regional Conference on Higher Education stated "higher education in the Arab States is under considerable strain, due to high rates of population growth and increasing social demand

for higher education, which lead states and institutions to increase student enrollment, often without adequate allocated financial resources."[11]

Moreover, faced with the challenges of providing flexible enrollment and lifelong learning availability, Arab higher education institutions have not been able to meet the new demands and needs of their societies. Thus, the urgent need for in-depth reform of university structures is evident. In view of this, the Beirut Declaration calls for harnessing modern information and communication technologies to "contribute in the provision of courses and degree-awarding programs through multiple and advanced means, thus breaking through the traditional barriers of space and time."[12] In responding to what is mentioned above, Arab countries have adopted radically new visions that would prevent Arab societies from lagging behind other socio-economically advanced nations.

Meanwhile, there is a lively discussion taking place throughout the Arab world about several aspects of education and reform measures that are needed. This discussion, which has gone largely unnoticed in the West, has been generated by several developments in the region. Those developments include strong demand for education at all levels, the resulting pressure on educational facilities and budgets, and concern on the part of the private sector that the education system is not providing graduates with appropriate skills to deal with the challenge of globalization. Arab students have a variety of opportunities now, including private educational institutions, English-medium schools, religious-curriculum institutions, and study abroad. The thesis also attempts to describe the fundamental attributes of educational systems in the Arab world and then it will review the main issues that are being discussed by Arab leaders in the private sector, government and academia, about areas that need reform.

There are, at present, devastating changes and conflicts of interest in the world which place the Arab countries in the face of long-term changes which could reshape all the dimensions of human life. This situation requires the Arab governments and active forces

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[11] UNESCO (1998). Higher Education in the twenty-first century Vision and Action. *World Conference on Higher Education, volume 1, Final Report, October 5-9, 1998* , Paris: UNESCO, p.44.
[12] *Ibid*, p.45.

in Arab society to consolidate their invulnerability, to protect their identity and overall national security, and to measure the time to come in order to secure for themselves an effective foothold at a time of fierce competition and increasing reliance on the products of the information and communication revolution and knowledge explosion. One of the most important engines which could help the Arabs control their own decisions is doubtless to avoid deficit in knowledge capital and enhance the level and quality of the knowledge being produced and applied. In this respect, it should be mentioned that the Arab countries are endowed with a large intellectual elite and a wealth of experience which can provide innovative solutions and alternatives based on a full awareness of changes and on a realistic approach.[13]

In the backdrop of the aforementioned ground realities the present study has been under taken to test S.M Lipset's model of political development on the process and pace of political change in Kuwait. The exercise aims, at testing the hypothesis that there exists an empirical correlation between education and political development. The case of Kuwait has been selected for the simple reason that the country represents differences in terms of growth and pattern of education. However, despite priority to the education sector, Gulf States are no match with Kuwait in terms of political modernization and democratization.[14]

It may not be an act of unworthiness to repeat that education is of value in itself (intrinsic value) and is valued for what it can do (instrumental value). Education is desired for itself as it opens up a vast world of opportunities and ideas to the educated person. It is also of great instrumental value in the process of economic, social and political growth and development. There is strong empirical correlation between education and political change. Education empowers and, through empowerment, affects larger socio-political processes. Exemplifying this hypothetical correlation as an important phase in the growth of the theory of political development is perhaps best represented by S.M Lipset in his work, *Political Man*, which is widely regarded as representing a major departure from the

[13] *A Plan for the Development of Education in the Arab Countries: General and Higher Education and Scientific Research*/ALECSO. (2008). Department of Education; League of Arab States. Tunis : Alecso, p.9
[14] See Table I, Chapter II.

established methodological orientation of American political sociology which at that time was unquestionably dominated by the approach systematized by Talcott Parsons.

The Parsonian method whose pedigree is traced to Max Weber and his study of the cultural foundations of the origin of capitalism in Europe led the inquiry into social action and social institutions, including politics and political institutions, through a study of the values and norms of a society. The result was a framework, which stressed the elements of consensus with in a social system. Lipset, on the other hand, placed primary emphasis on a study of the interests of various groups in society. In unraveling the "social bases of politics", therefore, Lipset came to grips with the problem of conflict in society. Lipset's method was that of multivariate analysis. Instead of trying to identify any one particular variable, which determined the development of a stable democratic system of the western kind, which still remained the *telos* of political development, he attempted to find a cluster of variables, which correlated with what he identified a priori as developed political systems. His investigation showed that factors such as wealth, industrialization, education and urbanization all correlated fairly highly with European and English-speaking stable democracies, and then, at a decreasing rate, with European and English-speaking unstable democracies and dictatorships, Latin American democracies and Latin American stable dictatorships. This cluster of variables, which together he called economic development, was, therefore, crucial in estimating the prospects of the growth of a developed polity out of a backward society. But even within this cluster of variables, all were not equally important. Citing Daniel Lerner's study on the, Middle East.[15] Lipset emphasized quite strongly that of all these variables, it is education which is definitely a necessary condition for democracy.

Education presumably broadens man's outlook, enables him to understand the need for norms of tolerance, restrains him from adhering to extremist doctrines, and increases his capacity to make rational electoral choices. Further, at the level of individual behavior, the higher ones education, the more likely one is to believe in democratic values and support democratic practices. Thus it is only after there is a sufficient spread of literacy,

[15] Daniel Lerner (1958). *The Passing of Traditional Society*, Free Press, Illinois.

and therefore a wide area for the operation of the media of communication that democracy begins to function as a stable social order.

Long dominated by authoritarian regimes, the Arab World, today, faces the challenge of change posed by a variety of internal and external factors. In recent years, significant degrees of political liberalization have already been evident in a number of Arab states — although the extent to which this presages an eventual democratization of their political systems is far from evident. Else where, regimes have made more modest, perhaps only cosmetic, reforms or resisted demands for expanded public freedoms and participation. Whatever the faults of the regimes, one of their undeniable achievements was free mass education. Though lacking in quality, this expansion of education has nevertheless created higher level of consciousness, expectations and rudimentary organizational skills. Such attributes have been instrumental in building formal associations.

In this backdrop, the exercise examines and tests the argument that it is education that provided the base for democratization and liberalization in Kuwait. The globalization environment opened up a competitive ambience wherein public sphere had different trajectory of its own, and is like the free market open to all. But the development of capitalist economy towards monopoly capitalism narrowed the space of the free market as also that of the public sphere—the space for a rational and the very forces that had brought it into existence destroyed universalistic politics distinct from both the economy and the state.

It is no exaggeration to regard, Kuwait as a representative of West Asian societies in particular and the Third World in general as far as experiments in education, democracy and liberalization are concerned. Kuwait is beset with the problem of grappling with the forces of education as a factor in democratization vis-à-vis their indigenous Islamic, socio-cultural values. A study of this sort signifies not only an understanding of the emergent responses of the socio-political institutions to the challenges of democratization in the third world countries but also helps in assessing the future course that events in the third world are likely to unfold as a result thereof.

The study will also be significant from the point of view of understanding the rapid changes that are taking place in the Arab World towards a democratic and liberal setup with in the broader parameters of an Islamic frame work what in the Arab parlance is termed as *nahdha* (awakening). The process of change and innovation is not yet complete, and the new patterns that have emerged are not yet final. They are part of a current of change of which it is only possible to indicate the general direction. While the old order is being gradually eroded, the study can help in predicting the new shape that is likely to emerge in the Arab world in its quest for modernization.

The study divided into five-chapters including conclusion has been descriptive and analytical in nature. The research design is experimental with education being the causal factor. Kuwait remains an experimental group. Both primary and secondary data sources have been utilized to understand the direction of change. The study is based on data combined in books, articles and government policies on the nature and status of education as a factor and the changing dynamics of democracy and the processes of democratization in the third world country especially Kuwait. The empirical data about Kuwait were gathered from various sources that included documentary analysis of reports, studies, and other documents. The documents were either gathered directly from the institutions or from official Web sites of the related bodies. The information about Kuwait was mainly taken from official Web sites of related agencies.

Chapter I of the thesis entitled *Education, Liberalization and Democratization in Arab world* largely deals with the massive and substantive changes in the world economic, political, social and cultural foundations and their resultant impact in Kuwait. The chapter is principally concerned with liberalization, democratization in Arab world in general and Kuwait in particular with education as a factor insofar as they relate to freedom and human rights. There is a wide interest in the universal trends of democratization and in the various schools of democracy. The literature on civil society and democratization has concentrated on simultaneous process of democratic transition and consolidation. Genuine democratization, if successful and sustained, can produce accountable,

transparent, participatory, inclusive governance, instead of exclusive and repressive rule. Liberalization of political and economic systems throughout the region could support stability with education as an important factor.

Chapter II entitled *Kuwait: Education, Democratization and Development* brings out the changing nature of the state, civil society and the conviction that human capital is the basic foundation in the fulfillment of development tasks, and that education is the corner stone in the preparation, training and mobilization of the abilities of human capital, in order to meet national and regional needs. Kuwait allows, let alone encourages civil society to thrive and prepare the population, political parties, and movements to contribute constructively to eventual democratization. An attempt has been made to analyze whether education would be an instrumental asset for democracy, peace and justice in Kuwait to evolve a more participatory and accountable, political system as one that would suit the society.

Chapter III entitled *Regional Influences on Experiments in Political Liberalisation* focuses on the nature and levels of political liberalization. Political liberalization and political democratization are two processes that must be distinguished from each other. Political democratization, with its focus on popular political participation and elite accountability, requires political liberalization (the promotion of individual freedoms and rights). The latter cannot happen without the former. Although political liberalization can be witnessed throughout much of the Arab world, movement toward genuine democratization, enshrined and consolidated in both constitutional arrangements and political practices, is rare.

Chapter IV of the thesis entitled *Kuwait's Tryst with Democracy* explores the problems which democratization poses to the traditional political system of Kuwait and its tryst with democracy as a result of the discovery of oil. The intent of the study is to determine first the extent to which the Kuwait has been able to cope with problems of democratization and liberalization, and secondly the effect of the consequent changes upon its political authority and upon the state's traditional political institutions. Next it

analyzes the welfare state with education as a factor established in the aftermath of the oil boom, with special attention to the enormous socio-economic changes in context of liberalization which have swept Kuwait. Finally, the chapter focuses on the political consequences of democratization for these socio-economic transformations in context of liberalization. The chapter also analyzes the weaknesses affecting, and challenges facing, Kuwait's political system, balancing this assessment with a consideration of more positive factors, which have led to the restoration of parliamentary life after each period of dissolution. On June 29, 2006, for the first time universal suffrage was in force. It saw the participation of women in national elections. The voters selected the 50-members of the country's national Assembly. It is estimated that there are around 340,000 eligible to vote in Kuwait of which 57 per cent are women; the turnout was 35 per cent. In 2006 elections, there were 27 women candidates among the 249 in the electoral fray. But the repeated (five times) dissolution of Parliament raises many questions about democracy in Kuwait, which is located in a region that does not look favorably on democratic reforms. The Emir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah dissolved the National Assembly of Kuwait on 18 March 2009 over accusations of supposed abuse of democracy and threats to political stability. An early parliamentary election was held in Kuwait on 16 May 2009, the country's third in a three-year period. It also raises a legitimate question concerning the reason(s) behind the uniqueness of Kuwait, with its relatively open society. Why is there a democracy in Kuwait in the first place? Does it really reflect education as a factor towards empowerment within Kuwaiti society? Why have other states in the region moved so slowly, while Kuwait enacted a constitution in 1962? And what are the major challenges facing democracy in Kuwait? This chapter attempts to answer these questions, and to explore the strengths and weaknesses of a distinct continuing democracy in the Arab world, despite the limitations.

The last chapter explores the extent of genuine progress toward democratization and the degree to which it has in fact been eluding the region despite the urgency with which true change must be pursued if the countries of the region are to overcome the "tremendous challenges . . . in achieving the levels of human development 'with education' (sic) that only good governance, including its political aspects, can ensure."

CHAPTER I

EDUCATION, LIBERALISATION AND DEMOCRATISATION IN ARAB WORLD

This chapter is principally concerned with the concepts of liberalization, democratization in Arab world. The concept of freedom we address here is to be understood in its narrow political sense, which is the value and goal of genuine democratic regimes. A survey of democratic freedom is often assumed to entail a survey of human rights. But these two concepts are distinct despite the considerable overlap between them. A free majority in a democratic system may very well deny basic human rights to a particular minority or some specific individuals or groups within society. Indeed it is this potential danger within a free democracy, which led de Tocqueville to warn against the "tyranny of the majority." For example, if politically active Muslim fundamentalists are arrested for their ideas and mistreated in prisons this would constitute a clear violation of their human rights, yet this, in a free democratic society, may be passively approved of by the majority of the population; nor does this violation necessarily impair freedom of expression or political democracy for the vast majority.

The core definition of freedom adopted in this section of the chapter is that people are free to the extent that they actually have a choice in determining the nature of their political and socio-economic systems. Thus a system that imposes a "social good," which may even be a factor that serves democratic values—such as, for example, reducing large inequalities in wealth—is in fact undemocratic, since the policy was not freely chosen through democratic mechanisms.

The successful elections in Kuwait and other Arab societies such as Egypt and Lebanon indicate that Arab political events can no longer be reduced to violent overthrow of governments, coups de'tat, assassinations and royal family feuds. Democratic elections, often marred with irregularities and/or partial under-representativeness, reflect popular choices, even if they do not conform with the interests and wishes of ruling elites. Those

elections, however, tend to express an expanded role of the public sphere, which has been limited- if not eliminated- ever since autocratic rule came into being in West Asia. There is a wide interest in the universal trends of democratisation and in the various schools of democratic theory.[1] Free contested elections are the sine qua non of a democracy, but a focus on the characteristics of the voting process and the turnout at the polls is of little meaning without the civil liberties that must complement these elections. The purpose then is to give a general picture of the political rights and civil liberties in the Arab world with reference to Kuwait.

The realities of the West Asia are still obscured behind layers of ignorance about it, by people in the media and by people in government. The tide has been turning in favour of democratisation for sometime in the Arab world.[2] In fact, it could be argued that post-independence regimes were aware of popular desires for freedom back in the 1950s when new regimes and political parties were promoting their own ideological visions. Not that those regimes and parties satisfied in any way the desires and aspirations of the people. Far from that, Jamal ¨Abd-un-Nasir, for example, knowing the centrality of the notion of freedom among his audience, equated legal independence with freedom. 'Freedom' of the nation superseded individual freedoms which were seen as bourgeois values meant to perpetuate the rule of the capitalist elite. The ability of regimes to distort the meanings of freedom, democracy, and equality was not a result of the naiveté of the public but of brute force utilised by the various governments to impose their will, and their definitions.

The literature on civil society and democratisation has concentrated on simultaneous process of democratic transition and consolidation.[3] Amid the seemingly global democratic euphoria, the Arab world remains an authoritarian strong hold, where various

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[1] See David Held. (1987). *Prospects for Democracy*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993; and Held, *Models of Democracy*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

[2] See in this regard, Michael Hudson. (1991). `After the Gulf War: prospects for democratization in the Arab world', *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 3; and John Esposito & James Piscatori. (1991). `Democratisation and Islam', *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 3, Summer.

[3] Adam Przeworski. (1992). "The Games of Transition," in Scott Mainwaring et al., eds., *Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective*. Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, p. 109. Przeworksi argues that "what normally happens is . . . a melting of the iceberg of civil society which overflows the dams of the authoritarian regime." While he later observes that "liberalization could substitute for genuine democratization, thereby maintaining the political exclusion of subaltern groups", p. 111, the thrust of his conceptualization is that transitions move forward or back to reach a new equilibrium.

non-democratic political systems cling on to power with unsurpassed tenacity and remarkable power. What accounts for this seeming lack of desire on the part of Arab world to actively seek after democratic political systems, particularly now that democracy is a tangible political reality in so many previously undemocratic places? This section of the chapter examines the question of democratisation and different patterns of political rule and evolution in the course of the past few decades. Democratic transitions require two developments; one involving the state, the other society. The masses looked for societal alternatives, and an increasingly democratic civil society emerged as a result. In the Arab world, however, the collapse of the state has not been nearly as total, with Arab world leaders retaining enough political, economic and cultural sources of legitimacy to be able to supplant much of the potential appeal that burgeoning civil society organisations might have. Invariably all Arab world states, however, have been able to maintain those corporatist arrangements through which they keep key social groups beholden to them, thus discouraging them from indirectly undermining their own interests.[4]

CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE ARAB WORLD

In the Arab world, there have historically been three civil society organizations (CSOs) that have enjoyed considerable autonomy and independence from the state. They are the clergy (ulema), tribes and tribal confederacies, and traditional merchants known as the bazaaris. Despite their historical longevity, however, the circumstances within which these and other CSOs have interacted with the state in the Arab world have rendered them largely ineffective as forums for the emergence and spread of democratic ideals. The Arab world state has had a pattern of evolution, especially since the Second World War, the Arab world state had and continues to have real and tangible enemies outside its borders. The Arab world has gone directly after culture, manipulating its every aspect- from Islam to charisma, clientalism and patronage- to enhance its own source of legitimacy. Finally, the Arab world state instituted a mixed economy, supported by an ever-expanding bureaucracy, that enabled it to retain considerable economic leverage

[4] See Chapter IV of the thesis, which attempts to extensively deal with these issues.

over social actors and other potentially autonomous groups. The end result has been a depoliticisation of CSOs in the Arab world. CSOs remain largely independent of the state, but the state' s own active social and political agendas have given the CSOs little reason even to become political, much less agents for democratisation.

An analysis of the Arab world reveals two general types of economies in the region: those of the conservative sheikhdoms of the Arabian peninsula, whose incredible oil wealth has prompted one observer to label them as `oil monarchies';[5] and the less wealthy, more differentiated economies found in the rest of the region. Because of their different capacities and sources of legitimacy in relation to society, these two groups of states have gone about dealing with CSOs in quite different ways. One group, namely the oil monarchies, has used petrodollars to establish an extensive welfare apparatus through which it has sought to placate and buy off, rather successfully, most independent CSOs. In fact, as far back as the 1950s, in order to address the growing disquiet of the population in Kuwait caused by profound changes in economic and social relations, the states of the Arabian Peninsula began to utilise economic planning and development as a form of institutionalised social control.[6] For their part, the states with less affluent economies have resorted to a mixture of populism and repression to emasculate independent or oppositional groups. In either case, the historical development and current predicament of CSOs do not bode well for transition to democracy.

Democratic institution-building must match the (re)development of civil society, nourishing a political civic culture that helps all segments of society recognize the benefits of democratization – in the form of more equitable, accountable, transparent, and good governance by all and for all.

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[5] F. G. Gause. 1994). *Oil Monarchies: Domestic and Security Challenges in the Arab Gulf States*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press.

[66] J. Ismael. (1993). *Kuwait: Dependency and Class in a Rentier State*, Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, p. 134.

STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS

Formal independence came rather late to the Arab world, from the 1920s to the 1940s, and was soon followed by a host of radical and transformative revolutions throughout the 1950s and 1960s. The Nasserist revolution of 1952 in Egypt inspired similar events in Iraq in 1958, in Syria in 1963, in Sudan in 1964 and in Libya in 1969. Invariably, the incoming inclusionary states launched massive industrialization and modernisation campaigns and sought to enhance their control over society by building up a mammoth, modern bureaucracy. The economic and political developments only reinforced the historically urban character of politics in the Arab world, and, consequently, tribal and other bedouin groups increasingly lost any political significance they once might have had.[7] Nevertheless, as Cantori points out, the state has legitimised some (urban) groups, permitting them to play social roles, while prohibiting others from doing so.[8] Politically largely innocuous, most of these groups consist of associations of physicians, journalists, lawyers and engineers, most of whose members are reluctant to engage in overtly oppositional activities against the state for fear of losing the few privileges that the state has granted them. This corporatist arrangement, and with it the implicit understanding that has emerged between the various social groups and the state, has come under pressure in recent years. In any event, `these groups do not compete with one another horizontally as in the pluralist model but rather have a vertical relationship to the state'.[9]

Equally consequential for the CSOs has been the emergence of two reinforcing political developments, one domestic and the other international. Domestically, a number of Arab world states have at some point had highly charismatic leaders- Muhammad V in Morocco, Nasser in Egypt, Ben Bella in Algeria, Qaddafi in Libya, and Bourguiba in Tunisia, to name a few- who at least initially instituted inclusionary regimes that combined repression with charismatic populism. The goal of the state was (and in places like Libya and Iraq continues to be) to mobilise mass participation in pursuit of one

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[7] K. H. al-Naqeeb. (1991). `Social origins of the authoritarian state in the Arab East', in E. Davis & N. Gavrielides (eds), *Statecraft in the Middle East: Oil, Historical Memory, and Popular Culture*, Miami: Florida International University Press, pp 42±43.

[8] L Cantori. (1997). `Civil society, liberalism and the corporatist alternative in the Middle East', *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, Vol. 31, No. 1, p 37.

[9] L Cantori, `Civil society, liberalism and the corporatist alternative in the Middle East', p 37.

emotionally-laden project or another (the destruction of the `Israeli enemy' has long been a favourite). Severely sacrificed in the process was societal autonomy, and even those urban groups with a history of independence from the state- of which the clergy and the bazaaris were the most notable- have often found it necessary to toe the state' s line. Reinforcing the domestic omnipotence and repressive nature of the state was the volatile international environment of the post-WWII era, fuelled in the Arab world by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has ultimately benefited the region's authoritarian regimes in their pursuit of hegemony over domestic actors. Under the mantle of the Palestinian cause, some of the Arab world leaders have long solidified their own power bases internally, branded domestic opponents as Zionist collaborators, and built up the edifice of the state to unprecedented proportions.

Two official power centres emerged in the process. The first was the military, the central fount of official power and the primary institution that supplied the leaders and top officials of the state. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s almost all Republics of the Arab world, with the exception of Lebanon, had `revolutionary command councils' that ran the state. The second power centre was the official party- often the only party allowed to operate- which was designed to balance the repression of the military with popular mobilisation and mass political inclusion. Urban social classes were either repressed and depoliticised, or forcibly or voluntarily mobilised in support of the state' s anti-Israeli projects. By the 1970s, the powerful mixture of inclusionary policies on the one hand and brute repression and intolerance on the other had made the state' s domination of society nearly complete.

The economic ramifications of authoritarianism were equally significant. State capitalism left little room for the growth of a sizeable, autonomous capitalist class. Instead, the numbers of state employees in the bureaucratic and industrial sectors mushroomed, there being no tolerance of independent unions or syndicates of any kind. Much of the private sector activity, meanwhile, took place through relatively small shops and stores (a phenomenon which still continues today), the few employees of which are often drawn from relatives, neighbours and other acquaintances. Apart from a brief period in the

1940s and 1950s therefore, a sense of workers' solidarity has not fully developed in the Arab world. Industrialists similarly found themselves curtailed by the intrusive reaches of the state, even after the initiation of economic liberalisation policies (known as the *infitah*, or open door) in the mid 1970s and 1980s. Most states simply redefined their economic roles and continued to remain `the largest business "corporation"' within the country.[10]

The record of most Arab world states on divestiture has been modest. The limited economic reforms implemented have primarily been designed with tactical political considerations in mind and have not changed the overall nature of the state's involvement in the economy.[11] Nowhere in the Arab world has there been the wholesale implementation of neoliberal market reforms. Nevertheless, although the *infitah* improved the lot of many in the upper and upper middle classes, their essentially dependent relationship with the state remained intact.

An overwhelming majority of these wealthy industrialists are import-export merchants who continue to rely on the state for securing contracts and acquiring the necessary permits and licences. Even if the risks were not as severe as they are now, few industrialists have much incentive to act against the state. The relationship of the state to society is based on a somewhat different premise in the oil monarchies. But the outcome- lack of societal pressure for change- is essentially the same. The corporatist arrangement in the oil monarchies has four central axioms. At the top sits the Royal family, which dominates and is often indistinguishable from the state (especially in Kuwait). The Royal family is, in turn, supported by three key social groups: the clergy, whose close association with the state has resulted in the emergence of a so-called `Official Islam' (*al-Islam al-rasmi*); chiefs and notables from other tribes; and wealthy merchants and industrialists. None of these three groups is willing to challenge an implicit understanding with the state that has long ensured their economic prosperity, social affluence, political inclusion (or acceptance) and physical security. Those openly opposing the regime

[10] I. Harik (1992). `Privatization: the issue, the prospects, and the fears' , in I Harik & D Sullivan (eds), *Privatization and Liberalization in the Middle East*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, p. 12.
[11] H. Barkey (1995). `Can the Middle East compete?', in L Diamond & M Plattner (eds.), *Economic Reform and Democracy*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 167.

invariably come from outside these corporatist groups, with many being Islamist activists who question the credentials of the Royal family.

Formal independence came to the oil monarchies even later than in the rest of the Arab world (Kuwait in 1961). Nevertheless, the Royal families that eventually dominated the state had already achieved local control and prominence long before the departing British recognised them as the rulers of the region. Upon the assumption of formal power, the Royal families based their control of the state on two powerful principles, one economic the other historical. Historically, the Royal families used the apparatus of the state to presents themselves as the `natural' outgrowth of tribal forces in society, the true representatives of the essence of their nation.[12] By so doing, they nullified any potential claims to rulership that other tribal chieftains or local notables might have had, thus eliminating an important source of possible opposition or, for that matter, societal independence. With varying degrees of success, they also sought to cultivate additional legitimacy on religious grounds, presenting themselves as the embodiment of religious piety and righteousness.[13] Formal independence meant transferring the oil industry to the control of the Royal family, by which time other traditional sources of wealth- pearl diving and overseas trade- had run their course and exhausted themselves. It was only in the 1950s and 1960s, after would-be Royal families had already started dominating the oil sector, that economic growth set in and wealthy merchants and industrialists began appearing in the cities. Economic patronage, in fact, can be traced to pre-independence days, although the evolution of the modern state gave it institutional sanction and legitimacy. Currently, throughout the Arabian Peninsula the second most affluent echelon of society after the Royal family is made-up of a class of wealthy, urban-based merchants, followed by Chiefs and other notables from non-Royal tribes.[14] While the merchants owe their economic livelihood to receiving state contracts and maintaining close relations with the Royal family, tribal leaders seek various types of patronage for

[12] The use of the term `natural state' here is inspired by Khaldoun Hasan al-Naqeeb, although he uses it in a specific historical context, lasting roughly from the 16 century to the 19 century. See, K. H. al-Naqeeb. (1990). *Society and State in the Gulf and Arab Peninsula*, London: Routledge, pp. 6-24.

[13] F. G. Gause. (1994). *Oil Monarchies: Domestic and Security Challenges in the Arab Gulf States*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, pp. 12-13.

[14] M. Field. (1985). *The Merchant: The Big Business Families of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States*, Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press.

their tribe and Royal recognition and acceptance. As a result, the dependence of the upper and middle classes- both civil service employees and import-export merchants- is much more direct and acute in the oil monarchies than in most other Arab world states. What of the lower classes? Again, it is in the treatment of those in the lower rungs of the economic ladder that the oil monarchies and the other Arab world states differ radically. In inclusionary authoritarian states, it is those in the lower classes- the rural immigrants, seasonal workers, others in low-wage jobs in the informal sector- which are most susceptible either to the manipulations of the state or the message of the opposition. This is the group which the state wishes it could ignore but cannot afford to do so because of its inherent volatility. In the Gulf, in short, the lower classes do not matter politically. The pulling back of the regime from efforts at overall control of society, already evident by the late 1980s, gained further impetus in the wake of the Gulf War, which revealed the broad chasm separating Arab political elites (who tended to oppose Saddam or be ambivalent toward him) from the common people. In order to bridge this gap, the government of Kuwait among other Arab countries declared democracy a major policy objective. In all those countries, elections have indeed been held amid conditions of pluralism and (relative) probity. It is now clear, both within and far beyond the Arab world, that liberalized monarchy has proven far more durable than once imagined.[15] The trademark mixture of guided pluralism, controlled elections, and selective repression in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Algeria, and Kuwait is not just a "survival strategy" adopted by authoritarian regimes, but rather a type of political system whose institutions, rules, and logic defy any linear model of democratization.[16] By 1992, the year after the Gulf War's close, even conservative Saudi Arabia had promulgated edicts on decentralization and instituted an Advisory Council. While such policies are still tentative almost everywhere in the Arab world, there is no denying the growing independent participation of the

[15] Thomas Carothers. (2002). 'The End of the Transition Paradigm,' *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, January, pp. 5–21. Carothers (p. 9) notes that "of the nearly 100 countries considered as 'transitional' in recent years, only a relatively small number—probably fewer than 20—are clearly en route to becoming successful, well-functioning democracies or at least have made some democratic progress and still enjoy a positive dynamic of democratization."

[16] For several discussions of this phenomenon see the essays in the section on 'Elections Without Democracy?' by Larry Diamond, Andreas Schedler, and Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way in the April 2002 issue of the *Journal of Democracy*. These articles highlight the exceptional character of democratic transitions.

masses in politics. From Kuwait to other countries, large political demonstrations have become far more frequent. Often they protest policies (such as the abolition of subsidies) adopted to deal with the decline in state revenues. These policies stand in stark contrast to the populism of the past, and the pain that they cause is exacerbated by the contraction of state spending in areas such as health, education, and welfare.[17]

According to Emmanuel Sivan, there is a partial and uneven application of the principle of equality before the law. Bedouins and Palestinians are held to be outside the ambit of full-fledged citizenship in Kuwait, as are Shi'ite Muslims in Saudi Arabia. Even human rights groups have become targets of particularly heavy-handed harassment in Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.[18] Conflict, violence, and repression, particularly in this era of globalization, produce economic and social stagnation that will marginalize these countries, and the region overall, even further in an environment in which peace and political stability are the basic foundations for economic competitiveness in the global economy. This is not to speak of the immense human suffering produced by internally and externally initiated, supported, and manipulated violence and instability.[19] There are many reasons for the region's political instability, economic plight, and human suffering. However, the lack of open political systems, heavy-handed authoritarian rule by autocratic governments, and most governments' violent and repressive struggles with opposition movements and groups are key factors in limiting these societies' potential for human, economic, and social development.[20] Genuine democratization, if successful and sustained, can produce accountable, transparent, participatory, inclusive governance, instead of exclusive and repressive rule. Liberalization of political and economic systems throughout the region could support domestic peace and, by extension, strengthen

[17] Mass public demonstrations protesting austerity measures have occurred in Kuwait during 1989, 1990.
[18] Emmanuel Sivan. (1997). 'Constraints & Opportunities in the Arab World ', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 8, No. 2, p. 108.
[19] For an estimate of the human and material costs of the various armed interstate and intrastate conflicts in the Arab world between 1948 and 1992, see Saad Eddin Ibrahim, 'Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World: An Overview,' in Baghat Korany, Rex Brynen, and Paul Noble, eds.. *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World: Theoretical Perspectives*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995, p. 35.
[20] See the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Arab Human Development Report 2002*, New York: UNDP, 2002, for a strong call for Arab societies to further human development through, among others, education, economic growth, poverty reduction, democratization, and regional cooperation.

regional peace and stability. Of course, a transition from autocratic and closed systems to open and democratic ones cannot be realized without pain.

Transition pains, however, can be reduced if the society is in general receptive to political, economic, and cultural opening, and if it already displays a civic political culture that has been carefully promoted and groomed by civil society throughout the years and decades preceding the official initiation of a democratization process. Few authoritarian governments in the region allow, let alone encourage, civil society to thrive and prepare the population, political parties, and movements to contribute constructively to eventual democratization. Despite the acknowledged (and experienced) problems of intermittent democratization pains, some authors believes that, certainly in the long term, democratization is a positive and worthwhile endeavor for all societies of the region. What is required is not the immediate (or even eventual) adoption of full-fledged Western-style liberal democracy, but a gradual process toward more participation in the political and economic life and governance of the country, in harmony with religious norms and teachings respected throughout society. The question is not whether democracy would be an asset for peace and justice in the Arab world, but which path toward a more participatory and accountable, political system should be embraced as one that would suit each society.

There are only few or, as some would argue, no established democracies in the region, and, at best, some fledgling experimentation with democratization, driven – as well as hindered – by cautious steps toward political liberalization. In this context, discussions about the utility of democratization in preventing structural and direct violence within and between the societies of the Arab world can as yet be only an academic exercise. However, in the long run there is a possibility for democracy to unfold in the region. A number of main challenges need to be overcome to make this happen: the negative role of external great powers; the legacy of a long history of violence; and clashes between Western and local/regional political and spiritual norms and values.[21]

[21] For previous studies on prospects for, trends in, and obstacles to democratization in the Arab world, see the two-volume series edited by Baghat Korany, Rex Brynen, and Paul Noble. (1998). *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World: Theoretical Perspectives*, and *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World: Comparative Experiences*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

There is hope for progress if the countries in the region become more prosperous, more cooperative, less influenced by the preferences of external powers, and supported and assisted by the international community, which would in turn be represented by a restructured, reformed, and neutral United Nations. Of course, meeting these conditions represents a formidable, possibly insurmountable, challenge. However, some progress is taking place: there is evidence that secularization and religiosity can exist in harmony, that political leaders are able to balance tradition and modernity, and that both spirituality and physical life can prosper in the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious societies of the Arab world. Democracy, if based on a solid civic culture, can provide the glue for the functioning of such multi-faceted societies. Democracy can provide opportunities to address and resolve inevitable frictions in non-violent and constructive ways. All the while, constructive problem solving at the domestic level may then spill over to interstate relations as well. There is reason to believe (however faint it may be) that the societies of the Arab world are not condemned or cursed to endure violence, injustice, and marginalization in the global economy forever. Solutions to these problems exist. Democratization is part and parcel of any serious strategy to liberate the region from the scourges of war and injustice and from the highly politicized interpretation and distortion of religious teachings that, in their original meaning, are meant to encourage, not undermine, the construction of tolerant, just, and inclusive societies.

David Potter et al.'s definition of democratization, describes it as a movement "from less accountable to more accountable government, from less competitive (or non-existent) elections to freer and fairer competitive elections; from severely restricted to better protected civil and political rights, and from weak (or non-existent) autonomous associations in civil society to more autonomous and more numerous associations."[22] Democratization can be defined as a progressive evolution of these components (accountability, elections, civil and political rights, and autonomous associations) in the context of, and conditioned by, state and political institutions, economic development, social divisions, civil society, political culture and ideas, and transnational and

[22] David Potter, David Goldblatt, Margaret Kiloh, and Paul Lewis. (1997). eds., *Democratization*. Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 6.

international engagements. The end product is a minimalist definition of democracy, which, according to Bruce Russett, "[i]n the contemporary era . . . denotes a country in which nearly everyone can vote, elections are freely contested, the chief executive is chosen by popular vote or by an elected parliament, and civil rights and civil liberties are substantially guaranteed."[23]

Universal suffrage and free elections are only rudimentary components of a democracy. These must be enhanced by constitutional limitations on the government, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights. Some forms of popular representation and electoral legitimacy are far from sufficient to proclaim democratic governance and are often simply used to practice what is no more than concealed authoritarianism. A minimalist definition of democracy, based on popular power and popular sovereignty, must be the beginning, not the end, of a democratization process. Only when supplemented with constitutionally enshrined separation of powers, political pluralism, and individual rights and freedoms can a minimalist concept serve as the basis for the development of a liberal, pluralist, tolerant, and stable society.

Robert Dahl's more inclusive concept of "polyarchy," with the following seven pillars: elected officials; free and fair elections; inclusive suffrage; right to run for office; freedom of expression; alternative information protected by law; and associational autonomy[24] are pertinent in terms of processes of democratization. This definition is still very limited and focuses mainly on structures. Moreover, these requirements are relatively easy to meet, even without significant loss of power for political leaders, and they also do not extend democracy to the economic, social, and cultural aspects of political life.

Democratization, thus can be a journey, a journey toward, as Lincoln put it, "government of the people, by the people, and for the people." The four main elements of this advanced, and much more comprehensive, notion: political, economic, social, and

[23] Bruce Russett, 'A Structure for Peace: A Democratic, Interdependent, and Institutionalized Order,' in Inoguchi, Newman, and Keane, eds., *The Changing Nature of Democracy*, p. 160.
[24] Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*, p. 221.

cultural democracy. Political democracy consists of popular sovereignty; universal suffrage; protection of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; majority rule and minority rights; fair representation and periodic elections; peaceful succession; direct voting (referenda) on critical issues such as rule of law, habeas corpus, bill of rights, and responsibilities of citizenship. Economic democracy features protection of property; free markets; free competition; government regulation of trade and investment to ensure the absence of monopolies and the presence of fair standards in trade, competition, health, and environment. Social democracy means social security for the unemployed, the retired, pregnant women, and children; and provision of public health, education, and welfare. Finally, cultural democracy requires universal education; access to means of communication; and freedom of identity, including speech, assembly, religion, language, privacy, and lifestyle. This is a very comprehensive, but also very demanding, slate of key components that must be met by true democracies to qualify as such.

In times, wherein religion is an important factor, one needs to focus on a socio-religious interpretation of democracy. Religious democracy recognizes the supremacy of religious teachings and writings. Leaders make rulings based on scriptures and receive authority from religious institutions, while the populace expects rulings and policies to be in harmony with religious principles. Although this approach seems to clash with the broader, seemingly more inclusive, definitions mentioned above, a number of contributors argue that most religious teachings, particularly those of Islam and Christianity, embrace, support, and in fact demand obedience to values and norms that resemble modern concepts of democracy. If properly interpreted, religious authority can be reconciled with secular democracy; on the other hand, narrow or abusive interpretations of religious teachings may create the perception of supposed incompatibility and conflict.

To return to Schmitter, "no single set of institutions and rules – and, above all, no single institution or rule – defines political democracy. Not even such fundamental characteristics as majority rule, territorial representation, competitive elections, parliamentary sovereignty, a popularly elected executive, or a 'responsible party system'

can be taken as its distinctive hallmark."[25] Democracy is a composite of rules, freedoms, and relationships, in each and every case defining a certain stage of evolution in the relationship between the rulers and the ruled – gradually bringing both closer together in continuous evolution until they overlap in near perfect congruence. This journey toward "good governance" inevitably takes different paths, at different speeds, in different political, economic, cultural, and social contexts.

Sustainable democratization can be achieved only if the following conditions are met. Democratization has to come from below and from above. Although top–down gradualism is crucial in preventing abrupt dislocations and crises during transition periods, parallel efforts to support civil society are crucial in creating sustainable democracies that can withstand occasional regression from above. Moreover, democratization processes are sustainable only if minorities are protected; democratization will fail if the majority rules through the oppression of minority populations. In addition, successful democratization efforts have to go hand in hand with solid economic performance, political stability, and the unimpeded development of civil society. Ultimately, the region as a whole will prosper in the age of increasing economic globalization only if it can rid itself of war and persistent violence. So far the region has not done well in bridging its differences and in coming to terms with post–World War II (let alone post–Cold War) realities. Even if domestic stability improves and democratization progresses, the countries of the region need to settle their differences and struggles over contested territories before interstate cooperation can succeed. Although contested borders and territories are at the moment the key issues of international conflict, they will eventually be superseded by competition over access to water and other scarce natural resources. The region must create a solid foundation for regional cooperation and trust before it can embark on solving such future problems. If current struggles over land and borders are not resolved, future problems will only compound regional instability, and further conflicts over old and new security issues will be unavoidable.

[25] Schmitter, 'Some Basic Assumptions,' p. 33.

Moreover, periods of peaceful relations between former antagonists in the region cannot be explained by successful democratization processes – democratization is in its nascent stage throughout much of the region. Other factors, such as economic liberalization or the unpredictable emergence of enlightened or moderate leaders, have so far been more potent factors in explaining why former foes have opted for cooperation instead of confrontation. Nevertheless, because democratization offers an avenue for more active participation in national decision-making processes, further entrenchment of popular participation in the political process and public demands for fair, legitimate, and representative governance will strengthen democracies. This will limit unpredictable and arbitrary rule, which triggers domestic and international instability and conflict.

The fear of violence and instability in transition processes clearly pose threats to regional stability. In fact, interaction between weak and battered transitional democracies may be more fragile and conflict prone than that between stable autocracies. Democratization processes, where they have taken place, happened top down not bottom up. Although this process offers less opportunity for public initiative and participation, it prevents the dramatic (and traumatic) consequences of often violent struggles between the various groups competing for power, influence, and public support. Slower but gradual progress toward democratization, initiated and controlled from above, even if accompanied by undemocratic measures to neutralize spoilers of the democratization process (such as radical religious or nationalist movements), can in the long run lead to functioning democracies. The Islamic forces may in the long run be "co-opted" or enticed into democratic processes. This is the case when governments successfully respond to the needs of minority populations, and when all political movements have opportunities to participate in the political process. When democratization is parallelled by economic development, rising standards of living, and increased domestic and international peace, rank-and-file allegiance to radical movements has proved to be quite volatile, further improving chances for successful transitions. Democratization in individual countries would presumably benefit from the resolution of interstate conflicts in the region.

The need is for a more effective role of the United Nations in stabilizing the Arab world. For this to happen, three steps have to be taken: Western powers have yet to agree on a post–Cold War international order (and the United States' role in it); the United Nations has to undergo structural reforms to adjust the organization and its activities to post–Cold War realities; and the United Nations has to be provided with adequate resources and mandates enabling it to perform the tasks currently performed by the United States. Unfortunately, these three points are at the heart of the United Nations' limited capacity, even in fulfilling the tasks entrusted to it by the Security Council. The United Nations is by design an instrument in the hands of the international community or, more accurately, in the hands of a few powerful actors that, in different constellations, at different times, dominate and determine international politics. These limitations apply to the United Nations' activities not only in the Arab world but anywhere in the world. New agreements on a post–Cold War order, UN reform, and increased funding are of course desirable and would alleviate some of the United Nations' current inadequacies, but in the short run they are unrealistic goals. The United Nations' role in the Arab world will likely continue to be muted by American willingness (or absence thereof) to pressure Israel into cooperation with its Arab neighbors, the Palestinians in particular. In that case, the United Nations will remain relegated to play second fiddle to American regional strategic policies and preferences. The relationship between Islam, education, secularization, and prospects for democratization. Is the embrace of Islamic religion and culture throughout the Arab world an obstacle to justice, stability, development, and democracy in the region, as often assumed? Islamic teachings based on the premise of education (*Iqra*), originally envisioned the unity of state and religion (whereas Christianity did not), but periods of unison eventually gave way to periods of separation between mosque and state. The colonial powers' preference for top–down political rule in their colonies limited democratization processes. Democratization and liberalization were driven from above, by a small elite who had studied abroad and decided that economic liberalization was inevitable if state and nation were to survive in a competitive regional and international industrial economy. However, little was done to create a broad-based civic political culture. The results are now visible: with the recent advent of modernity and the communications revolution, it is now the lower strata of the population, marked

by allegiance to traditional Islam, that threaten to uproot the secularized elite. The suppressed masses are the main force in slowing down, halting, or even reversing secularization – by utilizing democratic processes. Moreover, top–down democratization has not resulted in the creation of a broad-based civic culture and democratic political institutions and processes. Although some Arab world societies have made halting progress toward political democracy, most of them have failed to make any significant strides toward social or cultural democracy. In countries where rulers continue to buy the population's allegiance and loyalty by providing social services and low taxes (financed through exports of mostly oil or gas), calls for further participation in the political and economic life of the country become louder nevertheless. However, this does not necessarily mean that these societies embrace secularization, which has been tainted by former elites' embrace of Western customs and cultural, political, and economic attitudes. In the name of secularization and the search for pre-Islamic identities, these societies have experienced a roller-coaster ride in their search for cultural identity. Coexistence, along with confessional systems and constitutional regimes, seems most promising in the context of the multi-ethnic, multireligious, quasi-secularist societies of the region. Most importantly, political democratization must give rise to economic and cultural democratization based on strengthened educational processes. Only then will democratic structures offer opportunities to all for political, cultural, and economic participation, while preventing majority rule of either secularized or ultra-conservative groups.

But the point is what do public attitudes tell us about the linkage between Islam and democracy? Are public attitudes toward more democratization and political openness influenced by religiosity and adherence to Islamic belief? Popular perceptions in Western societies, often resembling anecdotal stereotypes, hold that Islam and democracy are mutually exclusive concepts, and that levels of piety and acceptance of democratic principles are inversely correlated; that is, the more religious a person is, the less likely it is that he or she will embrace democratic principles. Such perceptions of the relationship between piety and democracy in the region may be misinformed by Western experiences. In West European and American societies, more religious people indeed tend to hold more conservative views and attitudes toward governance and domestic and foreign

policies. If one assumes that the embrace of and commitment to civic virtues are key requirements for the creation and maintenance of stable democracies, it is crucially important to study, monitor, and access public attitudes toward democratic principles and policies that support secularization and democratization. There have been very few attempts systematically to study the impact of Islamic religious attachments on individuals' attitudes toward democracy and governance. Islam is not necessarily an obstacle to democracy. Islamic attachments do not seem to obstruct the emergence of an open political culture, and thus eventually of sustainable democracy. Interestingly, the only significant correlation between piety and political conservatism was found among women, who seem to fear greater economic inequality between the sexes as an indirect consequence of a liberal political and economic order.

The Western-style liberal democracy may not be suitable for many countries in the region. On the contrary, regional leaders have used Western models to create sham democracies that are in reality forms of veiled authoritarianism, created to maintain an appearance of commitment toward the democratization process and intended for internal and external consumption. More recognition and credit should be granted to indigenous attempts to develop local versions of civil society and democracy, based on the conditions and traditions of each country. Iran's attempts to create an Islamic version of civil society and democracy, with the participation and protection of minority groups, may serve as a model for other local attempts to develop democracies that go beyond minimalist definitions of democratic governance (popular power and popular sovereignty) and facilitate gradual and non-violent reforms of internal and external political processes. There is a need for a commitment to move beyond minimalist forms of democracy. Systems that are democratic in form and authoritarian in substance produce violence through the exclusion of some parts of the population. Overly enthusiastic attempts to embark on Western-style democratization, as experienced during the Shah's reign in Iran, will lead to violence if no effort is made to integrate religious forces that have for a long time defined a society's political, social, and cultural life. If radical religious and secular groups are persecuted rather than integrated in the transition process, counter-revolutions and violence will result, particularly when reform processes

(as has been the case in Iran) fail to produce the economic gains expected by the public. Khomeini's ability to appease both Jihadis and Ijtihadis created a basic level of coexistence between modernizers and traditionalists. After the war, however, continuing socio-economic problems and efforts by Ijtihadis to portray Islam as compatible with democracy, along with a solid electoral process, brought Khatami to power in July 1997. Khatami's embrace of Islamic civil society and democracy and his commitment to dialogue between civilizations have produced a version of democracy that is different from, but not necessarily in opposition to, Western concepts and expectations. An inclusive approach that pursues progress in the context of freedom of thought and expression (and thus supports a vibrant civil society) offers opportunities to respect Islamic traditions within a more open, participatory society. Jihadis feel that the principles and aims of the revolution are being undermined. Balancing their interests with reforms certainly slows down the democratization process, but it keeps it on track and – most importantly – non-violent.

The combination of the political rights and civil liberties clearly lie at the heart of democracy, but a genuine functioning democratic system requires additional institutional elements and conditions: The first is a democratic constitution that is adhered to. For no matter how fair and free the elections, and no matter how large the government's majority, democracy must have a constitution that itself is democratic—in that it respects fundamental liberties—and the elected government must rule within the confines of that constitution, and in conjunction with a complex set of other institutions, within both the state and civil society, that help to ensure accountability. The second is the Opportunity for the development of a robust and critical civil society that helps check the state and constantly generate alternatives. For such civil society alternatives to be aggregated and implemented Political society, especially political parties, should be allowed unfettered relations with civil society.

An authoritarian system was defined by Linz as "one in which there is limited political pluralism—without elaborate and guiding ideology (but with distinctive mentalities), without intensive or extensive political mobilization and in which the leader (or a small

group) exercises power within formally ill-defined limits, but actually quite predictable ones." Although the literature is replete with other definitions, this one serves our purpose well enough.

Authoritarian regimes come in a variety of types: military, single party, dominant party, personal or traditional or some combination of features from these various types. Authoritarian regimes are not necessarily resented by their people. Indeed. some are deeply populist—they cultivate the sentiments of and are much admired by the mass of citizens. In varying degrees all authoritarian regimes seek to exercise a very tight control over both the direction of governmental policy and the expression of free opinions by citizens. The defining feature of all authoritarian regimes is that the ruling party, be it a group or an individual (monarch, president or sultan) dominates the political arena while allowing a margin of freedom—defined as the degree of liberalization-__which might be small or relatively large, within civil society. While no doubt liberalization improves the quality of life, and might be the handmaiden of democracy, the two concepts are quite different. While both are desirable, and are indeed twin features of the democratic West, yet they should not be conflated.

To note the presence of a process of democratisation in the Arab world is not to claim that the political apparatuses of power in the region have transformed overnight into representative bodies. Furthermore, strong Arab temptations can lead one to dismiss the differences between Middle Eastern political systems and their counterparts in the West as the product of different historical and cultural factors. According to this formula, traditional, informal bodies are equated with democratic-style parliaments: `The existence of an informal assembly (the majlis) in the traditional Arab world enabled individuals from all walks of life to approach their leaders directly and personally for assistance and aid.'[26]

Thus, for instance, several Arab monarchs—all of whom exercise enormous executive power—have taken significant steps to liberalize their regimes. This degree of

[26] James Bill & Robert Springborg. (1994). *Politics in the Middle East*, New York: HarperCollins, p 20.

liberalization is often taken—erroneously indicate a measure of democracy. But only titular monarchs can preside over a democracy. Monarchs who wield executive power—not to mention also at least some legislative powers, as all Arab monarchs do—may go a long way towards liberalizing their country but they can never establish a democracy since a democratic regime must entail the possibility of replacing the government, including the supreme executive – i.e. in this case, the King. It also involves the necessity of placing Supreme power in the hands of the people and their representatives a situation that the present Arab monarchs and presidents cannot of course contemplate. Moreover, a democracy holds no one immune—as are Arab monarchs and presidents and their families from public criticism. In short, democracy is based on certain types of institutions and political practices that permit constitutional change of government via popular elections.[27]

And thus all that can be said of Arab rulers who liberalize is that at best they are enlightened autocrats. Noteworthy, is that the regimes of Arab Presidents, as the present survey indicates, are by and large mostly less liberal than those of the monarchies (barring Saudi Arabia). The pressing issue with such regimes is whether the liberal steps they take do in fact move them towards a transition to durable stable democratic forms of rule, or are they merely a tactical retreat under internal and/or international pressures which can be reversed once the pressures are lifted, or once the liberal opening proves ineffective in dealing with the intractable problems they face. If Arab countries are to democratize then the first and most fundamental step is to establish the rules of the democratic game which must begin with establishing a constitution that strictly limits the power of the executive especially that of monarchs and presidents, and transfer ultimate power to the people and their representatives in national legislatures and local councils. We cannot begin to speak of a democratic change so long as the supreme seat of power remains in the hand of an all-powerful monarch or president, as is the case so far in all Arab countries.[28]

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[27] *Ibid.*
[28] *Ibid.*

The second basic step to the establishment of democracy is that the norm should be rule of law rather than rule by law where the ruler through informal mechanisms and pressures influences court rulings. Also, to speak of constitutional guarantees in the presence of conditional clauses—as in the case of all Arab constitutions—which grant broad political freedoms and civil rights then qualify them with vague restrictive phrases—that are always subject to the interpretation of the ruler—like "provided they don't violate generally accepted moral or societal values" is to nullify all guarantees, and perpetuate authoritarian rule.

While all reform must spring in the first instance from the efforts of the people of each Arab country and be motivated by their determined will to strive and sacrifice in order to force the change on their reluctant rulers, yet the developed democracies of America and Europe have also a vital role to play if local efforts are to succeed: that of providing an enabling international environment that would support and enhance the local efforts. Such external support needs to be carefully measured. Direct overt intervention will be counterproductive, for not only will it be resented by the people, but it will also undermine the efforts of the pro-democratic elements in society who will be branded as mere agents promoting a Western agenda.

Political regimes vary in the degree to which they enable voters to participate 'meaningfully in the system. This predominately means offering voters a choice between competing candidates for public office, and a workable democratic mechanism by which they may change their government. At the antidemocratic extreme of the spectrum are the kind of inherited monarchies that wield absolute unchecked executive power which dominates all aspects of the system (This applies to all the Gulf States, but Saudi Arabia is the supreme example). Not much better are the republican systems in which the voter is offered no realistic choice but to affirm, in a referendum, a single candidate for the presidency, who invariably claims a sweeping victory that approaches unanimity, and then proceeds to rule with near absolute power and without the possibility of his removal by any democratic means (Egypt, Libya, Syria). In effect such rulers behave very much like the inherited monarchies, and frequently far less liberally. Indeed, some are

assiduously seeking (and in the case of Syria managed) to have their sons succeed 'them as presidents (Syria, Libya, Yemen, Egypt). Somewhat better are the dominant party systems (Tunis, Algeria, Yemen, Egypt, Sudan). "Dominant Party" structures permit a margin of freedom for the opposition to campaign, gain seats in legislative bodies, articulate alternative policies, and criticize the government's performance—but all this only to the extent that stops short of their constituting any real threat or challenge to the group in power. Thus, legislatures are dominated overwhelmingly by the President's party. While in countries such as Jordan, Kuwait and other Gulf States, alliances between the ruling monarchs and traditional tribal chiefs frustrate the efforts of pro-liberal forces to democratize the system. Consequently, in such regimes, there is not the slightest chance that the Opposition can come to power, or even gain an effective weight in legislatures to meaningfully influence executive decisions on major public policies.

Important indicators of democratic elections is the existence of a mechanism that would reduce flagrant cheating, and the absence of restrictions placed on campaigning, which authoritarian governments impose ostensibly to reduce the risk of violence. Free and fair elections by themselves have little meaning if those elected do not in practice have the major power in the state to make laws and determine policies—as is the case in all the Arab states, barring none. While no Arab parliament has the major power in the state—that being invariably in the hands of the ruler who wields supreme power—yet in some countries (notably Morocco, Kuwait and Yemen) parliament does play a significant role in modifying legislation proposed by the government and constraining to some degree ministerial power.[29]

Some Arab countries—specifically, Libya and the Gulf States—ban political parties altogether. This might lead one to conclude— erroneously that a fundamental pillar of democracy is missing and hence cannot possibly be established. But in truth there is nothing in democratic theory that mandates the existence of political parties. Indeed the founding fathers of American democracy not only thought that political parties were unnecessary, but strongly believed that they are to be avoided because of the adversarial

[29] *Ibid.*

Spirit they give rise to, and their possible corrupting influence on public life on account of their dedication to the acquisition of power.[30]

Historical evidence has shown, however, that very small countries—such as most of the Gulf states—may still function democratically without political parties through politically oriented associations within civil society. But this is not possible for states with larger populations. However, for the development of a modern state, regardless of size, political parties are essential to permit the necessary aggregation of a large number of votes and the articulation of societal interests, in order to legitimate the proposed alternative policies to those of the ruling group. Public demonstrations and assemblies are essential rights in a free society. Though, there may be occasions when large gatherings could pose a real danger to law and order, yet the ruling elite in the authoritarian Arab regimes usually feel threatened by organized public expressions and use the pretext of their hypothetical danger to suppress them. Lebanon comes first among Arab countries with respect to these freedoms. At the lower end come Egypt, Libya, Syria and Tunis; and worst of all is Saudi Arabia.

One cannot begin to speak of a liberal, let alone a democratic, system unless there is 'an independent judiciary that can be relied on to observe a defendant's right to due process and a fair trial, and render verdicts with a reasonable degree of impartiality. No Arab regime has a truly independent Judiciary. Most, however, observe a reasonable measure of procedural safeguards in trial cases, except when the charges against the defendant are political in nature.

The right to free association is fundamental to democracy. A measure of the liberalization of a regime is the degree to which free association is permitted without hindrance or restrictions, or control by the government. A dynamic civil society is essential as a bulwark against the natural tendency of governments to accumulate power and their great propensity to encroach on the rights and freedoms of individuals. Here again Lebanon is the freest, and the worst is Saudi Arabia. If religious freedom is essential for the well

[30] *Ibid.*

being of many in the world, it is much more so for the Arab people who, whatever their faith or sect, are generally extremely religious. Moreover, strong religious institutions provide a protective barrier around individuals which governments are usually reluctant to breach. Thus religious organizations represent countervailing power to that of the state. The greatest religious freedoms and least discriminations against religious minorities is in Lebanon, followed by Morocco, Algeria, Syria and Tunis. Ranking poorly are Egypt and Sudan; but the very worst again is Saudi Arabia, which prohibits all non-Muslim faiths, and even within Islam tolerates only the Wahhabi version.

The status of democracy in the Arab world varies from country to country. However, they all share common socio-political features that impact and are reflected in their score on the democracy index. All Arab countries, as succinctly stated by Saliba Sarsar, are ruled by authoritarian regimes, their societies are "saturated with patriarchal values, religious dogma, ideological and political extremism, and narrow economic interests."[31] These factors constitute an enormous impediment to the development of a true full-fledged democracy. While all Arab leaders advocate democracy and claim that they have indeed embarked since long on the road of democratic reforms, yet in fact the actual results are meager. Arab rulers are far more concerned with retaining rather than sharing power. Thus they continue to wield near-absolute power, and often substitute the rhetoric of democratic discourse for real tangible political reforms that would liberalize their regimes. Nonetheless, very modest improvements did occur in most Arab countries, and the regimes in most have oscillated between opening up (in modest steps) and closing down political reform depending on changes within the climate created by the interaction of domestic and external factors.

Most Arab countries have been living in a state of crisis for at least the last two decades, under authoritarian regimes that precluded any real participation by the people. But in the last three years or so, the Arab world is witnessing the beginnings of a notable change, characterized by an increasing effort at introspection to determine the causes of their

[31] 'Quantifying Arab Democracy, Democracy in the Arab world' in *Arab world Quarterly*, Summer 2006.

malaise.[32] The Arab Human Development Report published annually since 2002 under the auspices of the UNDP is a singularly frank and perceptive example that analyzes the failings, and points the way to overcome them. Although the Report goes into considerable detail in dealing with each problem, the preponderance of the evidence it marshals clearly point that the fundamental cause of the Arab predicament is the failure to establish the institutions of a genuine liberal democracy. Over the last five decades, none of the Arab regimes faced a serious challenge. Rulers continued in office indefinitely, many more than 25 years. These regimes managed through an interlocking system of restrictive laws and several security apparatuses that monitor and pervade every aspect of social life to keep all potential opposition forces weak and fragmented. Opposition groups are prevented from holding mass meetings or demonstrations in order to prevent them from getting their message across and developing a constituency. This security grip, as noted by political analyst Amr Hamzawy, "creates a structural bias within the Arab elite" that functions to resist reforming movements, and maintain the status quo.

But with the surfacing of the new generation, who unlike the old-guard, are more educated and exposed to the democratic values and lifestyle, cracks are beginning to show in the authoritarian structure of most of the Arab states, as people in many Arab countries came out into the streets, in defiance of emergency laws, calling for freedom and reform. Citizens' pressures are therefore mounting on the incumbent autocrats to open up their system to greater participation by the various opposition forces. In the last five years or so a sea change seems to be taking place in the region. The most dominant issue now in almost all Arab countries concerns political reform in particular and freedom in general. The entire region is presently witnessing a marked democratic stirring. This is most notable in Lebanon, Egypt, Palestine, and Iraq, but is also significant in many of the Gulf States, particularly in Kuwait and Bahrain. Although the authoritarian Arab regimes—both republics and monarchies—continue to wield supreme

[32] *Ibid.*

political power, the increased public demand for reform and greater participation, backed by a now sharply critical and outspoken press, is developing into a genuine counterforce that the ruling elite can no longer ignore or lightly dismiss.

This development is due to the confluence of two forces: American pressure and rising discontent within the Arab world. The democratic movement is nevertheless still in its nascent stage and it is not inconceivable that the vicissitudes of power politics in the region and shifts in American foreign policy could present opportunities for the region's autocrats to recover lost ground and stifle the budding democratic domestic forces. American credibility in the Arab world will be strengthened if it stays the course and continues to pressure Arab governments quietly but firmly for significant steps along the democratic path. But despite these encouraging stirrings it cannot be denied that in all Arab countries semi-authoritarianism still remains firmly entrenched and resilient. Although multiparty competitive parliamentary elections have taken place their effectiveness in terms of leading to regime change is practically nil. Nevertheless, these elections have opened a space for expression by opposition forces and democracy activists. But the basic structures of the Arab regimes remain unchanged. With the notable exception of the Islamists, political parties are weak, fragile, and fragmented and the broad masses of voters are politically apathetic, except in Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon where the state in these countries is weak, and the polity unstable. The heads of state, whether monarchs or presidents, continue to dominate the entire political arena, wielding near-absolute power.[33]

High barriers obstruct the formation and activities of political parties, and winner-takes-all electoral systems and campaign restrictions strongly favor the incumbent regimes, thus preventing opposition parties from developing significant strength to constitute a challenge to the ruling elites. There can be no doubt that the weakness and fragility of political parties - except the Islamist - in all Arab countries is a major obstacle to any democratic transition no matter the laudable liberalizing steps taken by several Arab regimes. Therefore, to build up a democratizing momentum the constraints on the

[33] *Ibid.*

formation and activities of political parties must be diminished in order to allow secular liberal parties to develop in strength and create real constituencies. As things stand now, wherever elections were relatively free Islamist parties and movements have registered striking gains despite governmental constraints. Clearly, in most Arab countries, the Islamists have the potential to gain a very strong presence in parliament, yet in most cases they have adopted a precautionary strategy of contesting only a limited number of parliamentary seats in order to avoid provocation that would trigger regime repression should the latter feel threatened by the possibility of an undesirable election outcome which could threaten the regime's hegemony. This strategy is most evident in the cases of Morocco and Egypt, in which the Islamists competed in Morocco for only half the seats, and in Egypt for only one third.

Of great importance to the development of domestic pro-democracy pressures is the necessity that its forces negotiate coalitions that would garner their collective strength vis-à-vis the ruling regimes.[34] Of equal importance is Western support to the indigenous liberal forces. But for external support to be effective, the West must maintain a coherent and consistent set of policies towards the Arab countries they wish to help democratize. These policies must strike the proper balance between the two important—and interdependent—goals of stability and the mobilization of civil society to effect democratic reform. Until the tragedy of 9/11, the West had favored the first goal to the detriment of the second, with the consequence that many in the Arab world have tended to discount, and to distrust, the democratic rhetoric of the West as merely a vehicle for cynically pursuing its own interests which involve supporting and maintaining the autocratic regimes that have oppressed them for decades.

Of late, however, the West, led by the United States, has tended to correct this imbalance (between stability and change) by giving greater importance to promoting democracy and exerting greater pressures—coupled with both positive and negative incentives—on Arab governments to undertake meaningful political reform. No longer are the worn-out

[34] See Pillai, R.V., and Kumar, Nahendar. (1962). "The Political and Legal Status of Kuwait", *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, Vol. 11, Jan., pp. 108-130; see also Watt, D.C. (1964). "Britain and the future of the Persian Gulf States", *The World Today*, November, pp. 488-496.

excuses of autocratic regimes to delay reform indefinitely acceptable. The claim of exceptionalism of each Arab society, warranting reforms at a glacial pace, and the bogeyman of Islamist fundamentalists coming to power in the wake of significant democratic reform are rejected by both domestic opposition forces and the democratic West.[35]

Indeed, in the case of the U.S. in particular, this stress on the implementation of democracy at a reasonable pace within the Arab world seemed to be—at least up till 2005— a cornerstone of American foreign policy. There can be no denying that this U.S. stance and its close monitoring of the governments of the region with respect to democratization and respect for individual freedoms has been a major cause for the present vigorous demands for democratic reform within many Arab societies. While all local societal forces disclaim that external pressures have anything to do with their new-founded dynamism and outspokenness in the face of their autocratic rulers, yet there can be no doubt that the existence of that external pressure and the close scrutiny of the behavior of Arab governments by the West has provided for local pro-democratic activists—although unacknowledged by them—what may be called a "safety net." They now know, albeit often unconsciously, that their dictatorial governments can no longer afford to defy the democratic international community and brazenly suppress their people ruthlessly as they have been doing until lately. This new reality has pervaded the consciousness of opposition forces calling for democracy, and thus helped break down the barrier of fear that has long kept them subdued in the face of outrageously dictatorial regimes.

Thus a new political reality began to take shape in many Arab countries. Pro-democracy activists are becoming more aggressive, speaking more openly and taking to the streets in demonstrations demanding radical changes in terms of democracy and individual freedoms. Thus between 2004 and 2006 some democratic gains were made in most Arab countries, that were reflected largely in a greater measure of liberalization that involved

[35] Hudson, Michael C. (1977). *Arab Politics, the Search for Legitimacy*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, pp. 108-127.

greater freedoms of speech and association. But, on the other hand little has changed in terms of creating stable democratic institutions that would allow the rule of law and the implementation of the will of the people, including that of changing their government. It is true that U.S. President Bush sharply denounced previous American policy that supported authoritarian regimes in the world in the name of maintaining stability, and admitted that sacrificing freedom to stability brought neither to the peoples of the Arab countries, and moreover fostered an environment of resentment and violence that spilled out beyond their region. Yet one crucial question posed by Arabs remains unanswered and underlies, at least partially, the lack of credibility among the Arab masses towards the American claim that it seeks to promote democracy in the region for no ulterior motives. That question is: "if you wanted to support democracy in the Arab world, why did you begin with your enemies instead of your friends? Why Iraq and Iran? Why not us?"[36] Despite President Bush's forcefully articulated strategy of pushing forward freedom in the Arab world, the United States did little beyond carefully worded official pronouncements against the anti-democratic abuses of its Arab allies, while continuing to retain strong close partnerships with these authoritarian regimes. The cases of Egypt, Tunisia, and Saudi Arabia are the most striking examples. Some skeptics of U.S. credibility go further and point to America's refusal to engage with Islamic opposition parties and movements in these countries despite the latter's vehement declarations that they uphold the core principles of democratic government, repudiate all forms of violence and are actually observing the rules of democratic participation. Thus American diplomacy intercedes on behalf of secular pro-democracy activists imprisoned by America's authoritarian Arab allies, but remains silent with regard to similar abuses suffered by members of the Islamic opposition.[37] Moreover, no word of protest was heard from the American, or for that matter from any of the Western democracies, when Islamic opposition groups were either entirely legally barred—as a group—from political participation or even as individuals subjected to arbitrary arrests and harassment by state

[36] Mokhtar Trifi. (2007). President of the Tunisian League for the Defense of Human Rights. Quoted by Anne Applebaum in 'How To Solve a Problem Like Tunisia,' *Washington Post*, February 13.

[37] The example of the secularist Ayman Nour and the Islamist Essam El-Erian in Egypt is a case in point. Both were imprisoned at the same time on trumped up charges to silence their pro-democracy activism. But while US officials and senators repeatedly urged the Egyptian government to free Nour, they totally ignored the case of El-Erian.

security forces. Furthermore, America's refusal to recognize or deal with the Hamas-controlled Palestinian government, which came to power in completely free and fair elections, has brought into question the sincerity of the US call for democratic change in the Arab world. Of course the free choice of the Palestinians legitimizes Hamas' rule but this does not compel the United States to engage in any way with the government chosen by the Palestinians. Nevertheless, the average (Arab) person, who is not expected to readily make this distinction, will be hard put to perceive this US stance as consistent with its declared support for democracy.

This US predicament that undermines its credibility could be largely avoided if it clarified and stressed that a free election is but the procedural element of a democracy—necessary, but by itself insufficient to classify a regime as democratic. The US should, besides elections, strongly uphold the core principle values of a democracy, which include the rule of law, political and civic freedoms, rights of women and minorities, religious freedoms, and the recognized standards of democratic governance. In Arab countries there are Islamic activists and movements besides Hamas and other radical groups such as Hizbullah. A nuanced analysis of the Islamic movement in the Arab world will readily show that there is a plethora of Islamic parties and groups with diverse political agendas. Barring a fringe militant faction all repudiate violence, and wherever allowed to participate have done so peacefully and abided by the rules of the democratic game. Moreover, while some, (like the Muslim Brothers in Egypt, the Party of Justice and Development in Morocco, Al-Wasat Al-Islami in Jordan, and the Tagammu Al-Watani lil-Islah party in Yemen) advocate a traditional conservative ideology that would not be quite compatible with secular Western-style liberal freedoms, they are not too different in basic orientation from the ideas propagated by the conservative Bible-quoting evangelical movement that appeals to millions of the American people, and has no doubt played a significant role in electing President Bush, in 2000 and re-electing him in 2004. Other Islamic groups, however, like the (would-be) Wasat party in Egypt, stand on a political and social platform that goes a long way in satisfying most of the demands of the mainstream Arab liberals. Their aspirations with regard to political freedom is no less than their secular Western counterparts although their social orientation remains much

more conservative. Clearly, the Islamic movement is organically rooted in the political and cultural life of the Arab people, and Islamic parties are now generally acknowledged, even by their adversaries, as the most potent opposition force in almost all Arab countries. Thus, ironically, despite their intensely negative image in the West—mainly because of their heavy anti-Israeli stance on the Palestinian issue, and their anti-American position on Iraq (standpoints that are dismissed by the United States as irrelevant and insincere)—they are effectively the major force calling for political reform, and pressuring the region's authoritarian regimes to democratize.

It is not expected, nor should the West seek, that the Muslim worlds establish democracies that exactly mimic those of the western world. Democracy in the Muslim countries should take into account local traditions, and in order to take hold and develop must draw heavily upon values in the Qur'an that extol plurality and tolerance.[38] Hence, the urgent need for an Islamic reformation that would debunk the ossified, narrow doctrines of medieval scholars and show that Islam's holy text easily lends itself to liberal interpretations that are not compatible with democratic values. This would also preempt the standard argument of the Arab autocratic regimes for resisting democratization by disingenuously propagating the myth that should the Islamists come to power the door to democracy will be permanently closed for the foreseeable future. In a keen analysis of U.S. policy vis-à-vis the Islamic movements, Ken Silverstein pointed out that America and the West need not subscribe to any of the ideologies of the various Islamic parties, but this should not lead to maintaining a hostile attitude towards them. After all, he asked "How is it possible to promote democracy and fight terrorism when movements deemed by the United States to be terrorist and extremist are the most politically popular in the region?" Of course this immediately raises a set-of crucial questions: such as what kind of democracy would the Islamists establish if they come to power? Is the West justified in its present policy of supporting the incumbent so-called secular authoritarian regimes in frustrating the will of the Arab masses if they choose to vote the Islamists to power?

[38] Romozani, Nesta. (1985). "Arab Women in the Gulf'," *International Journal of Middle East*, Vol. 39, No. 2 Spring, p. 270.

Under such a state of affairs can one wonder why the credibility of the United States as a champion of democracy is called into question by most people in the Arab countries?[39]

The initial American vigorous support to the promotion of democracy in the Arab world, which reached its zenith in President Bush's ringing declaration in his 2004 inaugural speech that in their struggle for democracy and freedom the people in the Middle East will "not stand alone," soon abated when his democratic drive brought the unsalubrious result of striking electoral gains for Islamist parties in Egypt and Palestine, with indications that the same outcome is likely to occur in the forthcoming 2007 parliamentary elections in Morocco and Algeria. The US classification of Arab countries along a democratic continuum has now given way to a simple dichotomous differentiation: the radicals (eg. Syria, Hamas and Hizbullah) and the moderates (eg. Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia). Now it looks that the ceiling of Western democratic aspirations for the Arab countries is simply to maintain stability in the region while discouraging their autocratic ruling allies from flagrant human rights abuses.

On their part the Arab leaders have sought to mute the highly vocal and popular Islamic opposition by allowing them limited power. This has meant allowing them to form legally recognized political parties and run for national elections advocating an explicit Islamic platform, and in some cases even hold minor cabinet posts. This tactic is adopted in Jordan, Morocco, Yemen and Algeria. However, in all these countries the ruling regimes, through a mixture of covert suppression, co-optation and alliances with tribal chiefs, have so far managed to limit the gains of the Islamists. In Egypt, while the Muslim Brothers are denied party status, they were lately permitted to run as independents and campaign openly under their own slogan "Islam is the solution." The

[39] See Hadar, Leon T. (1994). 'What green peril?' *Foreign Affairs*, No. 73, pp.27-42; Miller, Judith. (1994). 'The challenges of radical Islam'. *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, pp. 43-56.; Huntington, Samuel P. (1993a). *Democracy's Third Wave. In The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, edited by Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, 3-25. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press; Huntington, Samuel P. (1993b). 'The clash of civilizations?', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, pp. 22-49; Kolakowski, Lesek. (1993). 'Uncertainties of a democratic Age'. In *The global resurgence of democracy*, edited by Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, 321-24. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press; Addi, Lahouari. (1992). 'Islamicist utopia and democracy'. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political Science and Sociology*, Vol. 524, pp. 120-30; Butterworth, Charles E. (1992). 'Political Islam: The origins.' *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science: Political Islam*. Vol. 524, pp. 26-37.

Egyptian regime, however, was rudely surprised when the Muslim Brothers, despite brutal suppression and vote rigging in numerous districts, gained 20% of the parliamentary seats though they competed in only one third of the districts.[40]

Combined transatlantic disagreement over democratizing strategy towards the Arab countries has weakened the reform momentum which gathered strength following the U.S. drive to democratize the region in the wake of 9/11. While the Bush administration pursued an aggressive campaign in the belief that freedom and democracy are priority goals for the Arab people, and political reform can and should be pushed without regard to any other considerations, the European policymakers largely believed that no radical reforms can be expected so long as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to obsess the minds of most Arab intellectuals and the overwhelming majority of the politically active segment of Arab societies. On the other hand the European Union's policy itself lacks both direction and consistency. The large size of the Union has led to consensus only at the lowest possible denominator. Though the 1995 Euro-Med Barcelona Accords spoke of "a comprehensive partnership through strengthened political dialogue," and did include some conditionality clauses linking economic assistance to progress in the area of democratic reform, yet in practice the political component of the Euro-Med agreement was relegated to a distinctly marginal concern. The reason, in part, is that the EU perceived the entire political reform issue as a very slow evolutionary process that is largely driven by economic development. Thus it encouraged bilateral economic and trade agreements between European Union member States and Arab countries, in the belief that economic development will lead to a better standard of living and foster a respect for human dignity and human civic and political rights. Moreover, as noted by Roberto Menotti: "The Euro-Med initiative downplayed democratization and evolved to mirror the Social Cohesion Strategy upon which the EU's own political and economic integration is based. In this vision, based on the European experience, only when threat perceptions change is a cooperative system viable."[41] Hence, in the EU's view, the crucial pre-condition to the fostering of democracy in the Arab countries requires first

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[40] *Ibid.*

[41] 'Democratize but Stabilize'. (2006) in *Middle East Quarterly*. Summer.

addressing the security issues emanating from the regional conflicts, particularly the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which has bedeviled Arab politics for three quarters of a century, and, more recently, the Iraq war that threatens to destabilize the entire Middle East. The European stress on stability and security rather than democracy stems from a geographic reality that cannot be ignored. The proximity of Europe to the Arab world raises very real European security concerns stemming from the threat which an unstable Arab world poses in the form of widespread illegal immigration, drug trafficking, and terrorist activities.

However, the G8 declaration of June 9, 2005 has shown a measure of convergence between U.S. and European strategies by stating that "regional conflicts must not be an obstacle for reforms. Indeed, reforms may make a significant contribution toward resolving them." This in effect was a rejection of the region's autocratic rulers' argument that wide democratic openings will open the door to extremist activities and destabilize the social order. But even as the Arab autocrats argue against rapid serious reforms they nevertheless claim that they are indeed democratizing, albeit at a gradual and measured pace. And indeed it cannot be denied that certain modest liberalizing steps are being taken in many Arab countries. But two problems remain: the first is that it is not clear, and hence hard to evaluate, whether these steps are indeed part of a genuine commitment to a long range plan that aims at eventually establishing a full-fledged democracy, or merely token gestures intended to placate the international community, in particular the United States, and the rest of the industrialized Western democracies. Two recent examples highlight this difficulty: the first is the new constitutional electoral amendment in Egypt which, despite its serious flaws, nevertheless allowed for the first time direct contested presidential elections. The second example is the first ever municipal elections in Saudi Arabia, which though highly defective is yet a landmark step in the history of the Kingdom.

The second problem resides in the risk that free and fair contested elections might bring to power popular non-democratic movements. The "Algerian Syndrome" cannot be entirely guarded against, but there are other encouraging, albeit limited, experiences in Lebanon, Mauritania, and yes even in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The wisest strategy to

adopt to limit the risk appears to be a kind of "balancing act" best expressed in the words of Alvero Vasconcelos: "The challenge is to combine support for reform processes 'from above' with backing for political movements pressing for democratic change 'from below', such that liberalizing authoritarianism becomes not an end in itself but a stepping stone toward full democratization." Hence the great dilemma in which substantive democratization and genuine pluralism become at once more urgently needed and more gravely risky.[42] While this two-pronged strategy is no doubt, theoretically, very sound, in practice it is most difficult to implement in the Arab context which is characterized by a weak, largely unincorporated, civil society constrained by state laws that severely restrict the freedoms of political parties and non-governmental organizations, buttressed by a battery of laws that criminalize all attempts by the former to seek any form of external support.

On the other hand, empirical evidence suggests that outside support to empower civil society with the aim of enabling it to force an opening of the system and check the arbitrariness of the authoritarian state can be effective only if there already exists a sufficiently robust civil society to begin with. This indeed is also the gist of the testimony given by U.S. State Department officials and other experts at the Congressional hearings held in May 2006 on the subject of U.S. aid to promote democracy. The evidence presented in the hearings showed that successes like those of Georgia and the Ukraine were possible only because civil society associations in these countries had reached a level of political maturity and organizational competence that made external assistance an effective element in their confrontation with the autocratic state. Where civil society was extremely weak, as is the case in most Arab countries, external assistance proved of little avail, and only succeeded in antagonizing the ruling regimes. Thus the conclusion was that though discreet assistance could be provided by the West to the fledgling forces of civil society in the Arab world, these latter must first predominantly rely on themselves to develop. That process, of course, will be long and painful, but there are already hopeful signs that in the not too distant future a critical mass of pro-democracy organizations and

[42] Daniel Brumberg. (2002). 'The Trap of Liberalized Autocracy: Democratization in the Arab World?'. *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 4, October, p.57.

activists will be reached in several Arab countries, as indicated in the country reports of this volume. At that point concerted massive external help could very well tip the balance of forces leading to a democratic breakthrough. The argument in this section has so far avoided the dichotomous model of framing the issue in terms of whether a robust civil society is a precursor for democracy, or, vice versa, that democracy is the prerequisite for the development of civil society. An acceptance of the latter view necessarily implies that democracy can only come about by a top-down process in which the people play no role or at most an insignificant one. It is difficult to accept this view since it flies in the face of abundant evidence to the contrary. The Cedar revolution in Lebanon, and the Orange revolution in Georgia are but the latest examples; and even more striking examples from the 1980s are the cases of Solidarity in Poland and the Group of 77 in Czechoslovakia, all of which attest to the possibility of an indigenous development of civil society under authoritarian rule, and even, as in the last two cases, under crushing totalitarian regimes.
On the other hand if one preconditions the forward progress of democracy only on the forces of civil society we would be hard put to explain the liberalizing steps taken recently in several Arab countries despite their weak civil society. Moreover, if a robust civil society must precede democracy, how could we ever hope to develop civil society in the face of an authoritarian regime that leaves no opening for civil organizations and ruthlessly crushes any possible autonomous civil growth at its inception. Fortunately, however, all authoritarian regimes in the Arab world, largely due to their geopolitical and military weakness and their interlocking economic and political relations with the United States and the West in general, cannot maintain the stark totalitarianism that would render the forces of civil society non-existent, as for example is the case in North Korea and Myanmar (Burma previously). Thus in all Arab countries, despite their general authoritarianism, there is a significant margin of freedoms for civil society, which enables it to develop and thus increasingly be able to impact state policy and force ever greater openings of the system.

Despite the denials of the American administration there is no contesting that a major impediment that prevents domestic democratic forces from full utilization of Western

pressures on Arab governments to effect reform is America's total support of Israel in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This has led to the perception among many in the Arab world that the conflict is in essence between Muslims and a largely hostile Judeo-Christian West. This perception has driven a wedge between large segments of the Arab Muslim people and the West, and has caste doubt on the credibility of the West's, particularly America's, vehement proclamations of its dedication to the goal of democracy in the Arab world. Unfortunately, this total U.S. bias in favor of Israel has played into the hands of the Islamists—whose commitment to democracy is not above suspicion—who have used this as a rallying cause against the West and its motives in the region. Worse still, the plight of the Palestinians, coupled with the humiliating developmental failures of many Arab regimes, fuel the recruitment of militant Islamic jihadists. While the Palestinian problem does not in any way justify the delaying of democracy in the Arab countries, as many of its rulers have tried to argue, yet no doubt the settlement of this festering problem, that has lasted for more than three quarters of a century, will go a long way to stemming an important source of anti-Western anti-democratic feelings in the Arab world. Such a settlement will thus open the door for America and Europe to play a vitally effective role in the battle for the hearts and minds of the Arab people in the interest of democracy. In this context, education as a factor in democratization and liberalization bears important testimony.

ARAB EDUCATION: TRADITION, GROWTH AND REFORM

The countries of the Arab world share with one another, and with Third World countries in general, certain common problems and aspirations. Following political independence, which for many of them was achieved in the aftermath of World War II, all of these countries exhibited a strong desire to industrialize, elevate their standard of living, raise their per capita income, improve sanitation and health facilities, provide the masses with better housing, improve and universalize education-in short, effect social and economic development. From the beginning, leaders in developing countries had a steadfast faith in

education.[43] It was viewed as "the master determinant of all aspects of change," as "the key that unlocks the door to modernization."[44]

There are several practical and theoretical reasons for the appeal of educational improvements to nation builders and policymakers. At the practical level, education was a Western institution that could be grafted, with relative ease, onto the institutional structure of an otherwise traditional society. In many Third World countries, the process of grafting was begun by missionaries and colonial administrators long before national leaders assumed the reins of power. Second, for those in political power, increasingly mass-based education ways (and still is) a visible accomplishment having direct, if not fully understood, impact on the lives of people. Third, the examples of industrialized countries, where educational changes were linked with technological elaboration and scientific advancement, served as both a stimulus and justification for educational improvements. At the theoretical level, the justification for education had its first impetus from postwar economists who found that economic growth could not be explained solely in terms of investment in the physical plant in accordance with the capital/output ratio model. Accordingly, they expanded the concept of investment to include education, that is, "investment in man."[45] Subsequent contributions by social scientists led to the differentiation of two major approaches to social change and development: the individual and the structural.[46] Individual modernity theorists in general agree that education assists not only in imparting new skills and knowledge, but also in rationalizing (modernizing) attitudes.[47] Structuralists argue that education serves the goal of social justice by

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[43] Don Adams and Robert M. Bjork (1969). *Education in Developing Areas*, New York: David McKay; Gunnar Myrdal. (1972). *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*, New York: Vintage Books; James S. Coleman (1965). ed., *Education and Political Development*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press; and Fahim Qubain (1966). *Education and Science in the Arab World*, Baltimore, Md.; Johns Hopkins University Press.

[44] Coleman, *Education and Political Development*, p. 3, and Frederick Harbison and Charles A. Myers (1964). *Education, Manpower, and Economic Growth: Strategies of Human Resource Development*, New York: McCraw-Hill, p. 181.

[45] Myrdal, *Asian Drama*, pp. 359-62; Adams and Bjork, *Education in Developing Areas*, p. 43; and William C. Bowen. (1964). *Economic Aspects of Education*, Princeton, N.J.: Prince- ton University, Industrial Relations Section, p. 316.

[46] See Myron Weiner. (1966). ed., *Modernization: Dynamics of Growth*, New York: Basic Books.

[47] Alex Inkeles. (1973). "Becoming Modern," in *Social Sciences and New Societies*, ed. Nancy Hammond (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, and Inkeles, 'The Modernization of Man,' in *Modernization*, ed. Weiner, pp. 138-50.

providing equal opportunities for lower-class children, thus improving their chances for upward social mobility. This, in turn, facilitates not only the development of an egalitarian system, but also the upgrading of the labor force.[48] These divergent approaches have in common an emphasis on the importance of the role of education in social and economic development. Notwithstanding the practical and theoretical justifications for education, as well as the high priority it has received, leaders in developing countries are facing stubborn obstacles to social and economic development. In his excellent study of modernization in South Asian countries, Gunnar Myrdal, for example, notes that "the economic and social conditions of South Asian countries today are not very different from those existing before the dis- integration of the colonial power system. The only major change has been the recent rapid acceleration of the rate of population increase. . . . On the whole, the masses in South Asia in pre-war times were as poor and their lives as miserable as they are today."[49]

A motivating factor, leading in varying degrees to this change, is the move toward greater egalitarianism and the assumption that formal education is a major vehicle toward this end. Egalitarian orientations are tied to, or in some instances hidden by, an assumption which is more overriding for most Arab governments, namely, that development, modernity, and international prestige accompany educational growth. Hence, the educational sector is usually a major consideration in national development plans. There have occurred other noteworthy developments in the social, economic, and political sectors in many parts of the Arab world. For example, the face of many cities has changed not only in terms of modem building construction, but also through the increasingly powerful role of financial institutions, elaborate commercial activities, and complex networks of communication. Additionally, industry and agriculture have been "revolutionized" as a result of the increasing mechanization and application of modern technology. At the socio-political level, most Arab cities have witnessed democratization- a high degree of political mobilization resulting in an active political role for the urban

[48] Cf. C. Arnold Anderson. (1972). 'Education and Political Development: Reactions to a Conference,' in *Education and Political Development*, ed. Coleman; and Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York: Herder and Herder.
[49] Myrdal, *Asian Drama*, p. 4

worker and the expanding middle class. There has also been a decline in traditional orientations in virtually all institutional spheres.[50] One may well ask why other developments appear to lag behind? Obviously, a comprehensive answer to this question would be complex and multifaceted. For the researcher, as for the political leader and the planner, a feasible first step in the evaluation is to examine the entire educational system and to identify obstacles to the realization of education's potential for economic and social development. Quantitative results and expenditures, however large, can no longer serve as an adequate index of educational efficacy. A series of high-level meetings and conferences in the Arab world have tried, among other things, to identify issues confronting education and to find ways of resolving them. The first major meeting was the UNESCO- sponsored Regional Conference of Ministers and Directors of Education of Arab States, held in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1960. This was followed by the 1966 and the 1970 UNESCO-sponsored regional conferences of the ministers of education and ministers responsible for economic planning in the Arab states, held in Tripoli, Libya, and Marrakesh, Morocco, respectively. Although the latter conference acknowledged the remarkable progress achieved in the educational field in the span of ten years (i.e., since the Beirut conference), the issues confronting education in the Arab countries not only remained, but had become more elaborate, pressing, and numerous. For example, the 1966 Tripoli conference passed a resolution to encourage "the planning of education; compulsory primary education by 1980; diversified secondary and higher education and a better balance between the components of the educational system; incorporating adult literacy plans and programmes in educational plans; promotion of the education of women and provisions for the handicapped."[51]

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[50] Baha Abu-Laban. (1970). 'Social Change and Local Politics in Sidon, Lebanon,' *Journal of Developing Areas*, Vol. 5, October, pp. 27-42, and "The National Character in the Egyptian Revolution," (1967), *Journal of Developing Areas*, Vol. 1, January, pp. 179-98.

[51] As quoted in UNESCO. (1966). Final Report: Third Regional Conference, p. 11. For full details, see UNESCO, Final Report: Conference of Ministers of Education and Ministers Responsible for Economic Planning in the Arab States, Tripoli, 9-14 April 1966, Paris: UNESCO, pp. 13-24; For latest data see, MENA DEVELOPMENT REPORT (2008) *The Road Not Traveled Education Reform in the Middle East and North Africa,* The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank: Washington DC, p.161..

Significantly, the issues and problems noted are very similar to those commonly identified in other developing countries.[52] In the opinion of many experts the role of education as a change agent can be enhanced if sufficient attention is paid to these issues. While basically in agreement with this view, we wish to stress the importance of other, perhaps less salient, issues which need to be considered in evaluating the efficacy of education as an instrument of economic and social development. Specifically, these include issues regarding (1) societal goals, (2) balance in institutional change, and (3) cautionary observations regarding realistic expectations for education and democratization, liberalization, development.

In recent decades, Arab education has achieved substantial growth in quantitative terms, with enrollments and other indicators expanding dramatically, including for females. Arab students can choose from different educational systems. Yet a lively discussion about quality is taking place throughout the Arab world. Business leaders worry that university graduates are unprepared for the private sector, and that universities are not doing relevant research. Observers are questioning traditional role learning and the absence of accreditation and objective evaluation, and considering reform measures.[53] There is a lively discussion taking place throughout the Arab world about several aspects of education and reform measures that are needed. This discussion, which has gone largely unnoticed in the West, has been generated by several developments in the region. Those developments include strong demand for education at all levels, the resulting pressure on educational facilities and budgets, and concern on the part of the private sector that the education system is not providing graduates with appropriate skills to deal with the challenge of globalization. Arab students have a variety of opportunities now, including private educational institutions, English-medium schools, religious-curriculum institutions, and study abroad. This section of the chapter attempts to describe the fundamental attributes of educational systems in the Arab world and then it will review

[52] Myrdal, *Asian Drama*, pp. 377-426, and Adams and Bjork, *Education in Developing Areas*, esp. pp. 123-39.

[53] For example, Thomas L. Friedman, 'Drilling for Tolerance' and 'The Saudi Challenge,' New York Times, October 30, 2001, and February 20, 2002, respectively.

the main issues that are being discussed by Arab leaders in the private sector, government and academia, about areas that need reform.

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF ARAB EDUCATION

The new awareness that there is no one-to-one relationship between education and democratization, liberalization and development is posing challenges to some traditional assumptions. Following an examination of the process of educational change in the Arab world, we will critically examine the role of education in democratization, liberalization and development, attempting to identify factors in the societal context which appear to influence formal education's potential as an agent of social and economic development. Educational Change in the Arab world since World War II, education in the Arab world in general has come to acquire three main characteristics: (1) secularization, as evidenced by the demise of the Koranic school, the kuttab; (2) formalization, resulting from the need for expansion, curriculum development, standarization, and Arab-tion-particularly in the North African Arab states; and (3) universalization, particularly at the primary level, in response to a growing, albeit nebulous, egalitarian ideology which sought to equalize opportunities through education.[54]

Presently, many Arab states appear to view educational growth as an important condition of socioeconomic development, democratization, liberalization and modernization. Although the rates of educational growth have varied from one country to another, the trend toward increasing emphasis on education has been a dominant force in the region in the past quarter of a century. Although there are differences among Arab countries in their educational systems, just as there are differences in their political systems, economic circumstances, and social customs, some common characteristics can be identified that apply for the most part. They are: a rapid growth of access to educational institutions, and significant growth in literacy, for females as well as males; governmental control and financing of most education, with a new trend to some privatization; the emergence of some Western-style educational institutions, and continuation of some religious-based ones; and limited study abroad. Each of these will be examined before looking at the

[54] Baha Abu-Laban and Sharon Abu-Laban. (1971). 'Educational Development,' in *The Arab World: From Nationalism to Revolution*, ed. Abdeen Jabara and Janice Terry. Wilmette, Ill.: Medina University Press International, p. 32.

reform debate. Just as there has been little study of the impact of curricula, so also it should be noted that one of the problems in understanding Arab education generally is that fully reliable and up to date information on Arab schools and educational systems is not readily available for all countries.

ACCESS AND LITERACY

Arab education generally is characterized, first of all, by a dramatic increase in access to education during the past four decades. The numbers of schools, teachers and students have grown very rapidly. For example, school enrollment in Saudi Arabia increased more than 160 times since 1952, from 25 thousand to over 4 million, and in Oman, since 1970 school enrollment has grown from 907 (all boys) to about 600,000 today.[55] Primary education is compulsory almost everywhere and primary enrollment ratios are generally very good. Every Arab state has at least one university, and most have more than one. Generally, education for females has grown along with that for males. While female enrollment tends to be lower, in most Arab countries it is 85%-95% of male enrollment, and in some cases it is higher. In Oman, 65% of the students at Sultan Qabus University are women. Moreover female students often get better grades on average than males. One of the reasons for relatively high female enrollments in universities is that many young men leave school early to work. It should be noted that coeducation is widespread, especially in primary schools and universities, although in the Gulf states, there tends to be gender segregation in the classroom, reflecting local social custom. Enrollments in higher education in the Arab world by 1997 had reached 15% of the total age cohort, which was only slightly below the world average of 17%. Average enrollment in the Arab region was higher than the average for less developed nations as a whole (10%) but only one quarter of the rate in the most developed countries (61%). Arab female enrollment in higher education in 1997 was further behind at only 12.4% compared to the world total of 16.7%, but it was growing rapidly, having risen from 8.6% in 1990 compared to the world female total then of 13%.[56] One measure of educational growth is improvements in literacy, which show substantial gains in all Arab countries. The over-

[55] 1952 Saudi figures from Alfred Thomas Jr. (1968). *Saudi Arabia, A Study of the Educational System of the Kingdom*, Tempe Arizona: American Association of Collegiate Registrars, 1968, p.40; recent figures from Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency; Omani figures from Ministry of Higher Education, Sultanate of Oman, The University of the 21st Century, Muscat, (2001), p.525.

[56] UNESCO Regional Office for Education in the Arab States. (2002). Beirut, *Higher Education in the Arab States*, Beirut, February, p. 6.

15 illiteracy rate for the Arab world as a whole is still nearly 40%, and the female illiteracy rate is higher than that. Yet, in a number of Arab states, such as Kuwait along with Lebanon, Jordan, Bahrain, adult and even female illiteracy has been reduced to below 20%.

TABLE I: HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES: ENROLMENT RATE[57]

COUNTRIES	NET PRIMARY ENROLMENT RATE (%) MDG		NET SECONDARY ENROLMENT RATE (%)	
	1991	2005	1991	2005
KUWAIT	49	87	--	78
U.A.E	99	71	60	57
BAHRAIN	99	97	85	90
OMAN	69	76	--	75
SAUDI ARABIA	59	78	31	66

The prospects of free party politics as part of liberalization and democratization under fundamentalist rule does not look promising given the distrust that fundamentalist leaders express towards any facets of western democratic life, and given their tendency to dismiss their enemies as `infidels' and/or `traitors'. There are also some other less apparent reasons for the increasing role of political par ties in the Arab world. The education revolution in the Middle East and success in slowly raising the literacy rates among females (despite the preservation of the gap between male and female literacy rates in all Arab countries) have increased expectations for modern means of political expression and representation in most Arab countries. No longer will a large section of the Arab population allow traditional family and tribal leaders- many of whom have been increasingly marginalised over the years- to articulate political interests and demands. Table II shows some figures of literacy rates for some Arab countries.[58] Political parties have allowed members of the educated, urban middle and lower middle class to organise

[57] *Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries.* (2009).UNDP-Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS): New York, Table 11, p.239.

[58] The Table II is adapted from John Waterbury & Alan Richards. (1990). *A Political Economy of the Middle East: State, Class, and Economic Development*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, p 362.

themselves away from those political associations that have been under the dominance of the rural and/or urban elites.

TABLE II: LITERACY RATES IN THE ARAB WORLD, 1990 (%)

Country	Female	Male
Bahrain	69	82
Iraq	49	70
Jordan	70	89
Kuwait	67	77
Lebanon	73	88
Saudi Arabia	48	73
Syria	51	78
Yemen	26	53

GOVERNMENTAL CONTROL AND FUNDING

The national government plays a dominant role in education, for most schools and universities. It typically controls curricula even at private schools. Most teachers are government employees, and most education is publicly financed. Most Arab countries have two or more separate governmental agencies that manage education: one for K-12, another for post-secondary, and often others for technical, military, or (in Saudi Arabia until very recently) for girls' education. Relatedly, most education is free or at minimal cost. As a World Bank study put it, "Free education, publicly provided, has been a central tenet of the social contract in every MENA [Middle East and North African] country since independence."[59] Government spending in the Arab world on education is relatively high, while private spending is low. As a whole, the Arab states devote between 5.4% of their Gross National Product to education, which is equal to the level in North America, higher than the global average of 4.9%, and higher than levels in all other areas of the world (South Asia is 3.3%, East Asia 2.9%, Latin America 4.6%, and Europe 5.3%).

[59] The World Bank, *Strategy*, p.7.

Education takes between 13 and 25% of national budgets in almost every Arab country; only Lebanon, where private education is very strong, is lower at 8.2%.[60]

TABLE III: PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION (% OF THE GDP)

COUNTRIES	1991	2002-05
KUWAIT	4.8	5.1
U.A.E	2.0	1.3
BAHRAIN	3.9	--
OMAN	3.0	3.6
SAUDI ARABIA	5.8	6.8

Given their very high average income per capita, the oil states, such as Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia, all seem to provide, on average, lower quality education than most other Middle East and North African (MENA) countries. These differences influence the role of human capital in achieving economic growth and the distribution of its benefits in each country. Nevertheless, the region on the whole also exhibits a number of similarities. These include high levels of commitment to investment in education and gender parity, and frequently a policy of guaranteed employment in government.[61]

A fundamental social change in the contemporary Persian Gulf is the emergence of women into the previously exclusively male world of public affairs.[62] The expectation of same-sex doctors creates an opportunity for women physicians in some Muslim countries that exceeds women's share of medical positions in many western countries. The rapid rise of women's education in the oil-producing countries may be interpreted by some as evidence that traditional constraints on women can be overcome by modernization. Put in economic terms, culture acts as a drag on rational allocation of resources, but this lag is overcome more or less easily as incomes rise. Traditional cultures are assumed to be

[60] World Bank, *Strategy*, p. 13; and UNESCO, *World Education Report 2000*, pp.118 and 164-66 (1996 data).

[61] MENA DEVELOPMENT REPORT (2008) *The Road Not Traveled Education Reform in the Middle East and North Africa,* The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank: Washington DC, pp.33-34.

[62] Magnus, Ralph H. (1980). 'Societies and Social Change in the Persian Gulf'. In: Alvan J. Cottrell, ed., *The Persian Gulf States: A General Survey*, p.406.

static, acting only as a lag on the forces of modernization and universalism.[63] But cultures can be dynamic as well as static. Cultural change often occurs with the formation of a nation state.[64] Ramirez and Weiss stress the importance of political centralization in educational diffusion for women at the elementary and secondary levels in developing countries. Their approach follows Meyer et al's (1979) emphasis on educational expansion as a key step in nation building.[65] Education serves many gods: It can be used to pursue salvation, vocation, civilization, participation, and recreation.[66] The relative importance of these goals is a matter of history, politics, and culture in Arab world.

Modern education is the first and most visible component of this change. In addition, the availability of abundant financial resources and the strong drive to implement social and economic modernization paved the road for tremendous progress in the expansion of female education, particularly at the primary level. First, in just a quarter of a century the proportion of women in the labor force more than doubled in every state. Second, in spite of this significant achievement, all six monarchies still lag far behind the rest of the world. They still have a long way to go in order to achieve equality between men and women in the work place. Two important obstacles have contributed to this outcome. First, there has been very little change in the attitude of Gulf societies towards the idea of men and women working together at the same place. A large proportion of women work in occupations which preserve a highly segregated atmosphere and permit the least possibility of mixing the two sexes (e.g. teaching). Second, women are discouraged from joining vocational training programs such as electrical or mechanical engineering. These occupations are preserved almost exclusively for men and are considered "men's jobs". Instead, women are encouraged to study subjects such as sewing and hairstyling. To sum up, in spite of social and cultural barriers the personal and professional status of women in the Gulf has tremendously improved over the last few decades. Certainly, education

[63] Ogburn, W. (1922). *Social Change*, New York: Viking.
[64] Ramirez, F. & Weiss, J. (1979). 'The Political Incorporation of Women', in *National Development and World System*, ed. J. Meyer and M. Hannan, Chicago: University Chicago Press, pp. 338-49.
[65] Meyer JW, Tyack D, Nagel J, Gordon A, et al. (1979). 'Public education as nation-building in America: enrollments and bureaucratization in the American states, 1870-1930', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 85, pp.591-613.
[66] Coats M. 1994. *Women's Education*. Bristol, PA: Soc. Res. into Higher Educ., Open Univ. Press.

has played a pivotal role in promoting this change. Indeed, Kuwait and Bahrain (with the largest proportion of women in the labor force) were the first Gulf states to open modern schools for girls. While Saudi Arabia, opened only women university in 2009.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

There are several types of post-secondary institutions in the Arab world. According to a recent UNESCO count, the 22 Arab League member countries had 175 universities, 140 university colleges, 13 Islamic universities, and a number of "technical colleges." The distinctions are as follows. A university offers degrees in several disciplines and usually offers graduate studies, while university colleges focus on one major discipline and are mostly for bachelor degrees. Technical institutes, which are sometimes called community colleges or intermediate colleges, offer a two-year or three-year diploma. Technical institutes are common throughout most of the region, accounting for one-third of all post-secondary students, although in Saudi Arabia they account for only 5% of students.

PRIVATIZATION OF EDUCATION

While education is mostly in the hands of the government, recently there has been a small but growing trend toward privatization of Arab education as some new educational institutions have emerged which are privately owned and funded. The emergence of new private Arab institutions follows a trend that has existed in the developing world since the 1960s, particularly in the Far East. Limits on governmental funding for education have been one impetus for privatization. Tight budgets have also encouraged a number of Arab governments to study the question of whether the traditional government-funded free system can be modified by adding substantial fees to pay for courses.[67] Of the 175 Arab universities existing in the year 2000, 47 (27%) were non- governmental. These non-governmental institutions existed only in 9 Arab states, and over half were in Lebanon (9 of its 10), Palestine (7 of its 8) and Jordan (10 of its 17). This trend is fairly recent. Of the 108 Arab universities established since 1980, 33 were private. In Jordan, the government in 1986 authorized the establishment of private universities, and today there are nine of

[67] UNESCO. (2000). *Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise*, Paris. pp.29-30.

them which enroll more than one-third of university students; several of these are English-medium. In Saudi Arabia, the private Effat College for women is only a recent phenomenon, and plans for Dar al-Faysal, a private university for men in Riyadh, have been announced.[68]

ENGLISH AND WESTERN CURRICULA

Some of the new institutions are English-medium schools and universities. One of the motivations for using English is to give students easier access to the latest publications and research in the sciences, medicine and other subjects. On the other hand, some people argue that Arabic should be the medium of instruction because students should be thoroughly versed in their own native language, and that studying in a foreign language is too high a price to pay in terms of cultural education. There is a debate among Arab academics and officials as to which language of instruction is best, and some have tried to bridge the gap by creating "hybrid" institutions, teaching in English and Arabic, which utilize English in the classroom plus Western textbooks on some secular subjects while using Arabic for Islamic studies, Arab history, culture, and the Arabic language. Behind these attempts to combine both the traditional cultural and the modern Western-style learning with solid traditional cultural education, is a belief that the former is necessary for the 21st century economy while the latter is important for traditional Arab civil society, and both are therefore important for distinct reasons. Business leaders recognize that "productivity and knowledge are linked in the private sector" and that especially "higher education increases income growth and productivity," and the global economy requires a knowledge of English.[69] There is now, also, a modest trend in post-secondary education to adopt the American semester and credit hour system, in both English-medium and Arabic-medium institutions. This has already happened in almost all Jordanian universities in most fields of study, and in some Saudi universities, partly because of the pressures of globalization.

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[68] Plans for Dar al Faisal were reported in *Gulf News*, February 5, 2002.

[69] Lara E. Furar (1998). ed., *Building the Global Information Economy*, monograph of the CSIS Global Information Infrastructure Commission, Washington DC: CSIS, pp. 41-42, and UNESCO, *Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise*, pp. 37 and 42. 21. UNESCO Beirut, *Higher Education in the Arab States*, p. 26.

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Over the past few decades, the study of Islam has remained a strong element in the curriculum throughout the region. In some Arab countries, the first schools established were Qur'anic, but then in the third quarter of the 20th century the very rapid growth in education was mostly in secular schools, where the curriculum roughly resembled public schools in the West. Simultaneously, however, there was an expansion in some Arab countries of schools and universities whose curricula were primarily religious subjects and Arabic, with minimal attention to science, math, and other "secular" subjects. To some extent, the persistence of Islamic education is a reaction to the growth of secular education by conservatives who want to foster Arab and Muslim civil society in the face of Westernization. In most Arab states, the regular curriculum of the public schools, which the majority of students attend, has a considerable amount of Islamic religious instruction. Generally speaking, Islam is a required subject at every grade level from one through twelve. The amount of time given to Islamic instruction varies. In Kuwait, for example, an average of about 10% of total class hours are devoted to it each year. In Saudi Arabia it consumes 32% of class time for grades 1-3, 30% in grades 4-6, 24% in grades 7-9, and then 15% or more for grades 10-12. These statistics do not give the whole picture, however, because other parts of the curriculum, such as history, social studies, and Arabic, have a fair amount of Islamic content.[70] Saudi Arabia is somewhat of a special case, since it has secondary school level Islamic Institutes which are managed by Imam Sa'ud University and the Islamic University, and enrollment is substantial.[71] In Saudi Arabia, three of the country's seven universities, with about one-third of all of the country's nearly 200,000 university students, offer a primarily religious education. At the same time, many educational institutions in the Arab world, especially in Saudi Arabia and other states, have a high proportion of religious content in their curricula, from primary school up through the university.[72] These institutes follow the basic public

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[70] Figures for Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, and Kuwait are from Nucho, Ed., *Education in the Arab World*, pp. 87-104, 149-63, 308-17 and 423-28, respectively. The Saudi and Qatari figures (1997 and 1996, respectively) are from UNESCO. (2001). *World Data on Education*, 4th edition, Paris. See also Hamid I. Al Salloum. (1995). *Education in Saudi Arabia*, Amana Publications: Beltsville MD, pp.33, 37 and 44.

[71] Hamid I. Salloum. (1995). *Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission to the United States*, Education in Saudi Arabia, Beltsville MD: Amana Publications, p.43

[72] For example, for curricula in Saudi Arabia see Salloum, *op. cit.*, p.44, and for several other countries see. Nucho, Ed., Education in the Arab World, *op. cit.*

school curriculum but add onto it a number of Islamic religious subjects, and require students to memorize the Qur'an and take annual tests on Islam.

STUDY ABROAD

The number of Arab students studying abroad had reached 175 thousand by the mid-1990s, of which 21% were in other Arab states. Study abroad rises steeply with level of education. Almost all Arabs studying abroad are post-secondary students and most of those are in graduate school. Fewer than 6% of bachelor's degree candidates are studying abroad, but 13% of master's candidates and over 34% of Arab doctoral candidates are studying outside their home countries.[73] Over the past three decades, there has been a steady stream of students from all Arab countries coming to the United States to study. Their numbers have, however, been relatively modest. Only in the second half of the 1970s did the number go higher. In 1979 it peaked at 34,000 but that was still only 12% of the world total. It has declined ever since. For example, in 1979 there were 10,000 Saudi students and 5,000 Jordanian students in the US; and today there are half those numbers. Lebanon had 6,000 and today has 1,300. Only for a few countries like the UAE, Bahrain, and Oman have the numbers increased, due mainly to the fact that they were under British control until 1970, when the British ended their colonial relationship, and after that many Gulf Arabs began coming to the US instead of Britain. Today the total number of Arab students in the United States is only around 25,000, which is under 6% of the foreign student total of 450,000. The largest numbers come from Saudi Arabia, with over 5,000, Kuwait and the UAE, with over 3,000 students each. Most students go abroad to acquire skills to help them with their careers. Most tend to study science, engineering and business. There are however several factors impeding study abroad for Arabs. First is cost. US education is expensive and beyond the reach of many. Secondly, the growth of local universities has allowed more to study at home. Third, the decline of scholarships given by Arab governments and the US government. Fourth, distance: the US is regarded by many Arab parents as too far away to send their children to study.

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[73] UNESCO Beirut, *Higher Education in the Arab States*, pp. 12 and 35.

Fifth: many parents are reluctant to have their children, especially their daughters, exposed to American society and culture. Sixth: political factors: for example students whose countries have poor relations with the US, or who live under strict regimes at home, have more difficulty coming to the United States. Finally, since September 11, many Arab parents have been reluctant to send their children to America, fearing they might be harassed by US law enforcement authorities or bigoted individuals.

QUALITY ISSUES AND EDUCATION REFORM

Several aspects of education are being discussed today by Arab businessmen, educators, and government officials. According to Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the Arab League, a major revision of the educational system is therefore urgently needed in order to identify the challenges, to formulate effective strategies and mechanisms that will enable us to overcome all encountered impediments and to upgrade the educational systems in the Arab World to international standards.[74] This discussion has received impetus from several different factors. One factor motivating the discussion is that Arab business leaders are concerned that Arab educational institutions are not providing graduates with the skills needed to work effectively in the private sector. At an international conference on Arab higher education held in March 2002, a leading Arab businessman stated that the West Asia would not achieve its full economic potential "unless we revolutionize our educational system and adopt a total change to our mindset." He said that in analyzing Arab economic problems, including low capital investment and a low ratio of economically active to inactive population, "one thing that lies at the heart of all of this is education." He explained that he did not mean the number of schools or the amount of money governments were spending to expand educational facilities, but rather the quality of education, where he found "the most alarming discrepancies." He said that in the industrial revolution, those nations which changed their educational systems ended up at the forefront economically, and that today the technology revolution and globalization are presenting a new challenge: "The countries that will end up as winners and generate wealth and prosperity are those that will have the most advanced

[74] *Promoting Educational Excellence in the Arab World*, Arab Quality Assurance and Accreditation Network, www.arqaane.org

and therefore the most competitive talent and skills..." He added that the quality of the education Arab university graduates were getting was not allowing them to create wealth and generate economic value. "Most of them would like to work for governments which are.. .already over- expanded and over-staffed." He deplored the fact that many Arab university graduates were unable to find adequate jobs because they were not properly educated. At the same conference, another leading Arab businessman said the fact that only about 10% of the private sector workforce in Saudi Arabia were Saudi nationals, was a "tremendous problem" which would get worse since 60% of the population was under 18. He said, "This disconnect between the private sector, the job holders and the kids looking for a job is a time bomb".[75] What are the shortcomings? A World Bank report on Arab education put it this way: "Education will need to impart skills enabling workers to be flexible, to analyze problems, and to synthesize information gained in different contexts. This requires focusing students on the process of learning - on learning how to learn - as well as on particular subject content. By all indications, education systems in MENA [the Middle East and North Africa] do not reward these skills. One knowledgeable Saudi observer echoed this, describing Arab university graduates this way: "typically they have high technical knowledge....(but) they are very weak in communication skills, they cannot write not only in English but in Arabic too. They cannot communicate verbally as well as they should. They cannot make a presentation, their computer skills are also very weak, and there is a major issue... .which is weak analytical skills."[76] Another observer of Arab education says that education reform in that region should promote critical thinking and creativity, a flexible curriculum and lifelong learning.[77] Pedagogy in most Arab schools and universities is typically based more on rote learning than it is on critical thinking, problem solving skills, analysis and synthesis of information, and learning how to learn. The World Bank and others have warned that such an approach does not prepare students well for the modern workforce. A recent World Bank study says, "What is known about the quality of education - de- fined as

[75] Abdelaziz Sugair, Chairman, Advanced Electronics Company (Saudi Arabia), speech March 13, 2002 at an AMIDEAST-sponsored conference in Marrakech on Arab education.
[76] Abdelaziz Sugair, speech March 13, 2002 at an AMIDEAST-sponsored conference in Marrakech on Arab education.
[77] Abdullah Mograby (1999), Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, *Education in the Arab World*, Abu Dhabi, pp.303-306.

learning and achievement - is not encouraging," adding: "Most importantly, education in the [West Asia] region does not impart the higher-order cognitive skills such as flexibility, problem solving and judgment needed by workers who will face frequently changing tasks and challenges in increasingly competitive export markets. Instead, the systems teach students how to learn and retain 'answers to fairly fixed questions in problem situations with little or no meaningful context' and thus reward those who are skilled at being passive knowledge recipients." This chapter concludes that the quality of Arab education and learning has suffered due to expanding enrollments and falling teacher compensation levels.[78] A Harvard study of Arab higher education also found that "widespread practices of rote learning and memorization exercises are incapable of developing capacities in students for problem solving and application of theory to practical concepts."[79] The numbers of Arab unemployed or underemployed school and university graduates are growing. They may still find government jobs but they have difficulty finding work in the private sector where productivity requirements may be higher. In the Gulf states, this question has become entangled with the issues related to foreign workers, who make up a large share of the workforce. Many thoughtful observers in the Arab world recognize this problem but there are few serious studies that have dealt with the issue in a systematic way.

A second area of concern is the question of an under-supply of students in science and engineering and related technical fields compared with students in humanities and social sciences. On the post-secondary level, data from 1996 showed that fewer than 29% of students in the Arab world were studying sciences and engineering, with 71% studying humanities and social sciences, and that the bias in favor of the latter had increased from 65% in 1991. The 29% included 9% each in basic science and engineering, 7% in medicine and 3% in agriculture. Officials of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development say that the growing Arab aware- ness of the need to improve the quality of

[78] World Bank, Strategy pp. 1 1-13. 39. Thomas J. Cassidy and Matthew L. Miller, "Higher Education in the Arab States: Responding to the Challenges of Globalization," Harvard University, Graduate School of Education, unpublished paper, Cambridge MA, March 2002.

[79] Thomas J. Cassidy and Matthew L. Miller, "Higher Education in the Arab States: Responding to the Challenges of Globalization," Harvard University, Graduate School of Education, unpublished paper, Cambridge MA, March 2002.

education is especially focused on the area of science and technology.' A third area of concern relates to the lack of research and knowledge production by the educational system, especially by universities. Numbers of universities and enrollments have increased substantially but most of the increase has been at the bachelors level and the growth has been on teaching but not on research or knowledge production. A UNESCO study declared, "In terms of population sizes, economic sources, and growth potential, the Arab states vary considerably, but in terms of their present possession of tools and skills of knowledge, particularly in aspects related to modem technology, they are still very much behind."[80] One measurable indicator of knowledge production is the number of academic papers produced by a country as compared to other countries, and the number of citations by others of such papers. The following Table IV shows that the papers produced in science and social sciences in the Kuwait are relatively few.

TABLE IV: RESEARCH IN THE SCIENCES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES[81]

	Number of papers 1995	number of citations 1993-97
Kuwait	324	1,576
Saudi Arabia	1,409	7,826

A new UNESCO study says the number of research centers at Arab universities is "not impressive" and their budgets are "meager," without which there is "little renewal of production of knowledge, but merely transmission of what is already known." It says that "the early spirit of Arab researchers, flowering during the Abbassid time in the Middle Ages, which has greatly contributed to the advancement of human learning ... has almost disappeared." UNESCO recommends that this be remedied, and calls for "a stronger political will to revive research spirit, and provide researchers with proper support and means." A fourth area of concern is quality assurance. There is no accreditation or other external evaluation system for Arab education, and even self-evaluation by educational

[80] UNESCO Beirut, *Higher Education in the Arab States*, p. 17.
[81] World Bank. (2000). *Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise*, Washington DC, pp.124-27

institutions is rare. One reason for this is that most education institutions are government controlled, so the governments make decisions on curriculum and other matters and they have not been interested in independent evaluations. UNESCO has concluded that "The present system of centralization ... has not led to continuous improvement of higher education but may have contributed to its stagnation," adding that "healthy competition is constrained." One close observer of Arab education calls for an area-wide accreditation system for universities, and area-wide testing standards for the Arab world, saying new means of assessment and evaluation are needed.[82] The Arab ministers responsible for higher education have begun to focus on quality assurance, reportedly because of the increasing demand for private colleges and universities. In the year 2000, they asked the Association of Arab Universities to establish a regional committee to advise Arab governments on ways to evaluate quality and establish some kind of accreditation system. But as a UNESCO report stressed, there is still a long way to tangible achievements in quality assessment, and what it calls the "culture of evaluation" in higher education is nearly absent.

One further issue being discussed among Arab educators is that shortcomings in education in grades 1 through 12 place an additional burden on the universities because incoming freshmen are not always sufficiently prepared. One study reported that in some Arab countries, "as much as 35-40% of instructional resources in higher education are spent on remediation of skill deficiencies of college entrants."[83] A final area of concern that affects primarily the Gulf states is the issue of expatriate teachers. Most teachers at all levels are nationals of the country they are teaching in, but in the Gulf states, large percentages of teachers - one-third to one-half or more - are expatriates, mostly from Egypt and other Arab countries. The importation of large numbers of such teachers has been the result of the rapid growth in demand for education and the limited supply of local teachers. Since most of the expatriate teachers are from Arab countries they know Arabic and Arab history and culture, but they tend not to be familiar with local history and culture in the Gulf, and may even be disdainful of it, so they may not be the best

[82] Adnan Badran. (1999). Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, *Education in the Arab World*, Ithaca Press: Reading UK, pp. 121-23.
[83] Cassidy and Miller, *Op. Cit.*, p. 9.

teachers from a local perspective. Gulf governments are seeking to increase the number of local teachers and reduce dependence on foreigners, but that dependence is likely to continue for some time. Arab officials who are responsible for education candidly admit that there are quality problems.

Arab Government officials also respond to criticism by arguing that the huge growth in demand for education has been a major cause of the problems now being discussed, because this demand has put such great pressure on the system. A senior official of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, recognizing this problem, argues that the Arab world should move away from such heavy dependence on government funding for education and involve other "stakeholders", such as the private sector and foundations. But the vast majority of resources for education still come from the governments in the region. Why has private funding played such a small part in Arab education? Part of the reason is the unwillingness of governments to relinquish control. One knowledgeable observer explains that the lack of private foundation financing for Arab education is attributable in part to a fear by officials and others that the private organizations would become too powerful. Another reason is the absence of laws in most of the region permitting private institutions, or encouraging them, for example, by making support of private institutions tax deductible. Although there is considerable charitable giving in the Arab world, most of it is for religious purposes, endowing mosques and other religious institutions rather than education or science.[84] The forces that determine whether or not civil society organisations can emerge and act as agents of democratisation are varied and diverse, often differing according to the particular characteristics of a region or country. Class composition and the nature of economic development, specific societal characteristics and cultural preferences, and the pursuit of certain state policies as opposed to others all appear to be determining factors in the widespread absence, or the emergence and growth, of a dense and democratic civil society. In the Arab world, all these factors eventually boil down to the structural features and policy agendas of the state. In the Arab world, the politics of clientelistic paternalism

[84] Dr. Mervat Badawi, Technical Director, Arab Fund, speaking March 15, 2002 at the AMIDEAST Conference.

are still alive and well, having recently experienced what amount to no more than mere cosmetic adjustments. In both the economic and political realms, dangerously high levels of functional paralysis are still a long way away. On the other hand, most of the emerging autonomous CSOs have yet to fully embrace democracy. Most, in fact, continue to adhere to dogmatic and uncompromising ideological blueprints- religious or otherwise- that are antithetical to democracy.

For the past several decades, Kuwait has made great strides in their efforts to develop their societies. These included creating a modem economic infrastructure and upgrading their educational system. This can be explained, to a great extent, by the introduction of modern schooling and the opening of several universities all over the countries. This "revolution" in the quantitative levels of education however, suffers from qualitative deficiencies. The types of academic learning and technical training are not geared toward the requirements of the job market. In other words, there is a mismatch between the educational system, where the main focus is on arts, humanities and religious studies in order to preserve traditional culture, and the labor force, where the need is for technical and managerial skills in order to achieve a higher level of integration in the international economic system. This contradiction between the desire to preserve traditional culture and at the same time aspire to be part of the global revolution in information technology is likely to endure for some time. It is further complicated by the slow change in societies' attitude toward women's status and role. There have been significant achievements but much more is still desired. There is a fundamental need to change the quality of education, to accommodate technical training and focus more on science and less on humanities.

CHAPTER II

KUWAIT: EDUCATION, DEMOCRATISATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Kuwait existed as a political entity since the early eighteenth century. All Kuwaiti Emirs since 1756 came from the al-Sabah family which held strong ties with the most prominent merchant families and tribes. Prior to the coming of oil, the mainstays of the Kuwaiti economy were trading, fishing, boat-building, and pearling.[1] Kuwait stands in the northwestern corner of the Arabian Gulf. It is a country of 16,000 square kilometres with around 1.6 million inhabitants.[2] The country was reportedly founded in the early eighteenth century by tribesmen driven from their homes in inner Arabia by warring kinsmen. Stretching over an area of flat desert devoid of sufficient water for farming, Kuwait offered its early inhabitants few and meagre resources. They turned to the sea, and in time became the Gulf's most prosperous businessmen. In time the Kuwait society encompassed three groups: the ruling Sabah dynasty, an oligarchy of wealthy businessmen, and a working class which was absorbed in fishing, pearl diving and ship-building.

Of these groups, the second has been by far the most powerful and dominant social force. It was the thriving spirit of business oligarchy which provided the ruling dynasty with their meagre income in the shape of customs duties (which was estimated, for example at about $40,000 in 1938) and provided employment for the rest of the community.[3] This triple social structure is still well entrenched in Kuwait today although new circumstances are still altering it. More than half of Kuwait's labour force, estimated by 1800 at some

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[1] Ahmad Mustafa Abu-Hakima. (1983). *The Modern History of Kuwait, 1750-1965*, London: Luzac & Company; Jacqueline S. Ismael. (1982). *Kuwait: Social Change in Historical Perspective*, Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

[2] See Hassan A. Ebraheem. (1975). *Kuwait, Political Study*, Kuwait University, pp.99.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 101. In 1871 Kuwait was proclaimed officially an Ottoman district attached to the governorate of Besra. Its Sheikh at that time (Abd Allah Al Sabah) was designated District Commissioner. However, despite the incorporation of Kuwait into the Ottoman Empire, Britain succeeded in reaching an agreement with Kuwait under Sheikh Mubarak Al Sabah. This agreement, which was signed in 1899, gave Britain full control of Kuwait's external affairs and obliged it to defend Kuwait from any external aggression. The agreement was terminated in 1961, thus paving the way for Kuwait's independence.

8,000 to 10,000 were engaged in pearling and seafaring. It is revealed that the average earnings in pearling hardly exceeded 100 rupees (just over $35 at the prewar rate) for a season of three to four months. This income was often supplemented by seafaring, which brought in, on average, an additional 150 or 200 rupees per man for an expedition of some six months. An industrious man could, in exceptional circumstances, add to these two sources of income by trading, and so might make a profit of some 100 to 200 rupees more. Thus, at best, average family earnings from different sources rarely exceeded 500 rupees, or rather less than $180 a year.[4] If we assume an average family of five members, then per capita income might reach 100 rupees, roughly $25. The unskilled labourer, on the other hand, lived below subsistence level. His daily wage did not exceed half a rupee, and employment was seldom available through the year. Poverty here had reached an unprecedented scale, unknown even by those in the agrarian communities of Iran or Iraq. In the pre-oil period, the system of governmental organization in Kuwait was predominantly of the traditional type.[5] That is, power was vested in an autocratic ruler, who according to tradition was selected from among members of the Sabah family for his superior personal qualities. The selection of a new ruler was regarded strictly as a family matter; and while clearly Kuwait was no democracy, this medieval political system allowed Kuwaitis much greater freedom and expression.[6] Regard for tradition made public opinion an important political force. Hence it became customary for the ruler to consult the notables of his community on matters of importance.[7]

Much contemporary discussion on Islamic education, Wan Daud (1998) maintains, betrays 'weak theoretical foundations, simplistic interpretation, and intemperate application, which do not do justice to its true ideals and heritage.'[8] This section is concerned to clarify what resources are available for someone wishing to embark on a more systematic explanation and justification of the distinctive features of Islamic

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[4] *Ibid.*, p.102
[5] Jacob M Landau. (1977). *Man, State and Society in the Contemporary Middle East.* Pall Mall Press: London, p.76.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] Abid A. Al-Marayati. (1972). *The Middle East: Its Governments and Politics*, Duxbury Press, p.278.
[8] Wan Daud, W. M. N. (1998) *The educational philosophy and practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas: an exposition of the original concept of Islamization.* Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, p. 24.

education. First, there is the Qur'an itself. The Qur'an is full of exhortations to pursue knowledge;[9] it proclaims the superiority in God's eyes of those who have knowledge,[10] but also emphasizes wisdom and guidance rather than the blind acceptance of tradition.[11] The pursuit of knowledge, it seems, is a religious duty. This, of course, raises the question, 'what sort of knowledge?' Muslim scholars have been at pains to emphasize that this does not license the pursuit of any kind of knowledge. Knowledge in Islam is subject to two major constraints. The first relates to its religious origin. The Holy Qur'an makes it clear that knowledge is a characteristic of God Himself and that all knowledge comes from Him.[12] This applies whether the knowledge is revealed (naqliyya) or humanly constructed ('aqliyya) and it means that knowledge must be approached reverently and in humility, for there cannot be any 'true' knowledge that is in conflict with religion and divine revelation, only ignorance. The second relates to its purpose. There is no notion in Islam of the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. Seyyed Hossein Nasr points out that in Arabic 'to know' ultimately means 'to be transformed by the very process of knowing'.[13] Ibn Khaldun pours scorn on the man 'who knows about tailoring but does not know tailoring'[14] and al-Ghazali says, Be sure that knowledge alone is no support.... If a man reads a hundred thousand scientific subjects and learns them but does not act upon them, his knowledge is of no use to him, for its benefit lies only in being used.[15] Like money, knowledge is not to be accumulated for its own sake but must be put to use. And the appropriate use for knowledge from a Muslim perspective is to help people to acknowledge God, to live in accordance with Islamic law and to fulfil the purposes of God's creation. Knowledge which does not serve these purposes may be considered useless. All this implies a concept of knowledge that is very different from dominant western concepts. Secondly, the traditions (*ahaddith*) of the Prophet Muhammad provide further insight into Islamic education. One hadfth (in al-Bukhari's collection) reminds believers that 'seeking for knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim man and woman',

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[9] For example, Quran, Ayat, 20, p.114.
[10] For example, Q. 58:11 and 39:9.
[11] Q. 2:170, 17:36 and 6:148
[12] Q. 35:28.
[13] Quoted in Eaton, H. G. (1982) Knowledge and the sacred, *The Islamic Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 3 . p 141.
[14] Ibn Khaldun (1967) *The Muqaddimah*, F. Rosenthal, Trans., original work published 1381) (vol. 3) Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, p. 354.
[15] Quoted in al-Taftazani, A.-W. al-G. (1986) 'Islamic education: its principles and aims', *Muslim Education Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No.1, p. 70.

another (in the collections of Tirmidhi and Darimi) says that 'he who goes forth in search of knowledge is in the way of Allah till he returns', while others (of less certain authenticity, but quoted, for example, by Bahonar, 2004)[16] say 'Seek knowledge, even as far as China' and 'Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave'. Some of these sayings have far-reaching implications: learning is a lifelong matter, it can be pursued outside the Islamic world and it is an equal obligation for men and women. Thirdly, though little of it could strictly be called 'philosophy of education', there was a substantial amount of writing in the high period of Islamic civilization that discussed educational issues generally. Both Nasir al-Din Tusi's Akhlag-i-Naseri and Ibn Maskuya's Taharat al-A'arag contain detailed discussions of moral education and other educational issues. Al-Ghazali's Fatihat al-'Ulfm is perhaps the closest to an early introduction to educational theory. In al-Muqaddimah, the great historian and sociologist Ibn Khaldun outlines the aims of education, the curriculum and the skills of teaching and also provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of Islamic knowledge. He follows the by now standard bifurcation of knowledge into that which is revealed (naqliyya or transmitted sciences, such as theology and jurisprudence) and that which is discovered ('aqliyya or intellectual sciences, such as medicine and mathematics).[17] Other texts, including Siyasat- Namah by Nizam-al-Mulk and Ghulistan and Bustan by Sa'di, examine topics like education, teaching, learning, youth, love and devotion. The Treatises (Rasd'il) of the Ikhwan al-Safa include discussions of psychological and philosophical issues that are of particular interest to educators.[18] This list, though far from complete, indicates something of the breadth of interest among Muslims in educational principles and practice. The tradition of broad scholarship exemplified in these writers has continued up to the present day.

Education, like religion, can never be a purely individual affair; this is because individual development cannot take place without regard for the social environment in which it occurs, but more profoundly because education, in that it serves many individuals, is a means for making society what it is. Education may thus be a vehicle for preserving, extending and transmitting a community's or society's cultural heritage and traditional

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[16] Bahonar, M. J. (2004) *The goals of Islamic education,* available online at: home.swipnet.se/islam/articles/goals.htm (accessed 7 June 2009).
[17] Cheddadi, A. (1994) *Ibn Khaldun* (A.D.1332-1406/A.H. 732-808), *Prospects*, Vol. 24, No.1/2, pp. 7-19.
[18] Tibawi, A. L. (1959) 'Some educational terms in Rasa'il Ikhwan as-Safa', *Islamic Quarterly*, Vol. 5. No.1/2, pp. 55-60.

values, but can also be a tool for social change and innovation. The sense of community in Islam extends from the local level of the family to the worldwide community of believers (*ummah*). What binds the community together is the equality of all believers in the eyes of the divine law (*sharf'a*). In Islam, social existence has exactly the same goal as individual existence: the realization on earth of divinely ordained moral imperatives. Indeed, the spiritual growth of the individual (*tarfqa*) can take place only within the *shari'a*. Muslims walk together along the broad highway of the divine law, which sets out God's will for people in both their private and their social life and helps them to live harmoniously in this world and prepare themselves for the life to come. The social and moral dimension of education in Islam is therefore eventually a matter of coming to understand and learning to follow the divine law, which contains not only universal moral principles (such as equality among people, justice and charity), but also detailed instructions relating to every aspect of human life. The *sharfa* integrates political, social and economic life as well as individual life into a single religious world view. Today, economic globalization has become the process setting the political scenario and instruments of participation at the global, regional, and national fronts.[19] This context tends to limit the discussion of development as economic growth rather than human development and democracy as formal/procedural democracy rather than substantial democracy,[20] which includes economic empowerment of the majority and the disenfranchised poor.[21]

In Islam, therefore, there is no question of individuals being encouraged through education to work out for themselves their own religious faith or to subject it to detached rational investigation at a fundamental level; the divine revelation expressed in the *sharfa*

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[19] Yasseen, Sayed (2008). "End of Representative Democracy". Appearing in *An-Nahar* Lebanese newspaper, 24 April 2008.

[20] Substantive democracy is a form of democracy that functions in the interest of the governed and is manifested by equal participation of all groups in society in the political process. This type of democracy can also be referred to as a functional democracy. Procedural democracy is a state system that has in place the relevant forms of democracy but is not actually managed democratically; accordingly the people or citizens of the state have less influence. This type of democracy assumes that the electoral process is at the core of the authority placed in elected officials and ensures that all procedures of elections are duly complied with (or at least appear so). It could be described as a democracy (i.e., people voting for representatives) wherein only the basic structures and institutions are in place.

[21] Milner, Helen and Kubota, Keiko (2005). "Why the Move to Free Trade? Democracy and Trade Policy in the Developing Countries" in *International Organization*, Vol. 59, No. 1, pp. 107-143.

provides them with the requisite knowledge of truth and falsehood, right and wrong, and the task of individuals is to come to understand this knowledge and exercise their free will to choose which path to follow. From a liberal perspective, the notion of free will in Islam is thus an unsophisticated one, involving simply the choice to accept or reject the complete package of beliefs, and contrasts sharply with the liberal notion of personal autonomy.

The only approach to social education that would appear to be compatible with Islamic principles is to put the religious values at the heart of the educational process for Muslim children. As al-Attas points out, it is more fundamental in Islam to produce a good man than a good citizen, for the good man will also no doubt be a good citizen, but the good citizen will not necessarily also be a good man.[22] Acquisition of knowledge Much work remains to be done on Islamic epistemology, though as we have seen, al-Ghazali, ibn Khaldun and others have made significant contributions.[23] However, three central points are clear enough. First, although knowledge may be derived either from divine revelation or from the activity of the human intellect, it cannot be divided into two classes, one religious and the other secular. All knowledge has religious significance and should ultimately serve to make people aware of God and of their relationship with God. Revealed knowledge provides an essential foundation for all other knowledge and people are free to pursue any branch of knowledge only insofar as they remain loyal to the divine injunctions contained in the Qur'an and the *sharia*. Indeed, any pursuit of knowledge may be viewed as a form of worship in Islam so long as it is undertaken within the boundaries defined by revelation. The educational consequences of this are clear: religion must be at the heart of all education, acting as the glue which holds together the entire curriculum into an integrated whole. This means that the autonomy of the subject or discipline, at least as understood in liberal thinking, is excluded, for all subjects and all knowledge need the guiding spirit of religion to give them purpose and direction. Thus, food

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[22] al-Attas, S. M. N. (1979) Preliminary thoughts on the nature of knowledge and the definition and aims of education, in: S. M. N. al-Attas (Ed.) *Aims and objectives of Islamic education*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, p. 32

[23] See also Halstead, J. M. (2005) 'The Islamic concept of knowledge: some reflections on the educational thinking of Professor Syed Ali Ashraf', in: S. A. Mabud (Ed.) *Essays in honour of Professor Syed Ali Ashraf*, Cambridge: Islamic Academy.

technology must take account of Islamic laws on food and sex education and sport must not contravene Islamic rules on modesty and decency. At a deeper level, a considerable amount of theoretical work has already been done on ways to bring other subjects into line with Islamic beliefs and values; these include natural science[24], social science,[25] history[26] and literature.[27] What is involved in this process is not merely grafting an Islamic component onto modem western knowledge, but the reconstruction of the entire discipline in accordance with Islamic principles. Secondly, as already noted, knowledge is not seen as valuable in itself or for, say, liberation, but is valuable only insofar as it serves to inculcate goodness in the individual and in the whole community. The pursuit of knowledge should stimulate the moral and spiritual consciousness of the student and lead to faith (*fman*), virtuous action (*amal salih*) and certainty (*yaqin*), which are constantly emphasized in the Qur'an.[28] Certainty may sometimes be achieved through an acceptance of the authority of the teaching of the *'ulama'* (the learned) about the Qur'an and the Prophet. Islam therefore encourages an attitude of respectful humility towards such legitimate authority and trust in the truth of the knowledge that it hands down. The implications for education are that the cultivation of faith is an essential part of education and that there is no justification for encouraging children to question their faith. This does not mean that religion should be used to hinder human invention or scientific enquiry,[29] but simply that it provides boundaries within which Muslims can pursue their studies with confidence. Thirdly, since teachers have a special responsibility to nurture the young and develop their spiritual and moral awareness, their personal lives, beliefs, character and moral integrity are as important as their academic expertise. Muslims have long recognized that students' education is as likely to occur 'through imitation of a teacher

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[24] See Mabud, S. A. (1988) 'Curriculum designing for natural sciences from an Islamic point of view', *Muslim Education Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 19-33; al-Attas, S. M. N. (1989) *Islam and the philosophy of science*, Kuala Lumpur, International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization.

[25] Ba-Yunus, I. & Ahmad, F. (1985) *Islamic sociology: an introduction*, London, Hodder & Stoughton.

[26] Qutb, M. (1979) 'The role of religion in education', in: S. M. N. al-Attas (ed.), *Aims and objectives of Islamic education*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, pp. 48-62.

[27] Ashraf, S. A. (1982) 'Islamic principles and methods in the teaching of literature', in: E. H. Nasr (ed.) *Philosophy, literature and fine arts*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 22-40.

[28] For example, Q 103:3 and 15:99

[29] Badawi, M. A. Z. (1979) 'Traditional Islamic education: its aims and objectives in the present day', in: S. M. N. al-Attas (ed.) *Aims and objectives of Islamic education*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, p. 117.

and personal contact with him'[30] as through instruction. Although the teacher, as transmitter of (religious) knowledge, is considered an authority figure worthy of respect (and therefore not generally open to challenge by students), there is no reason in principle why interactive learning methods should not be used. Indeed, Badawi (1979) has shown that traditional Muslim education had a number of characteristics that may seem progressive even today. There was a natural integration of the curriculum and a close personal relationship between teacher and taught, elitism was discouraged, undue attention was not paid to examinations and pupil grouping was less rigid. Above all, traditional Muslim education was not an activity separated from other aspects of society; it was rooted in the community it served, responding to its needs and aspirations and preserving its values and beliefs.

Law and order were preserved in a simple and unceremonious way in accordance with Islamic law as modified by tribal tradition and local custom. Internal security was maintained by a small bodyguard, while during the times of external threats the whole population would be mobilized. Education was maintained mainly through private semi-religious institutions and it was only in 1912 that the first secular elementary school was established. As far as medical services are concerned the state did not provide any, until after the pumping of oil in 1946, when hospitals were founded.

The discovery of oil in abundant quantities radically altered the economy of Kuwait.[31] This was apparent in the appearance of a super affluent urban society which replaced the old primitive one. This new urban setting provided uniquely attractive employment conditions for technical and managerial personnel from other countries. Since 1946, petroleum has been the dominant feature of Kuwait's economy, providing some 93% of the government's revenue.[32] Between 1946 and 1988, oil revenue grew from $500,000 to $6000,000,000. Eventually tiny Kuwait found itself sitting 'on top of the largest proved reserves of the cheapest oil in the world, about 70 billion barrels, compared with 40

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[30] Ibn Khaldun, 1967, p. 426, *Op. Cit.,*
[31] Michael C. Hudson. (1977). *Arab Politics, the Search for Legitimacy*, Yale University Press, p.187.
[32] A. Al-Marayati, *op. cit.*, p.282.

billion in the United States'.[33] Today, Kuwait is classified as the fourth largest oil-producing country in the world. The oil bonanza, apart from consolidating the political power of the state - and that of its ruling family - has also given the state considerable economic power, thus undermining the former predominance of the business oligarchy.[34] The enormous oil revenue has made it possible for the country to acquire technological innovations and to use them productively. Although the oil industry will probably remain the foundation of Kuwait's economic activity for at least another century, the country is now adopting some measures to diversify its economy.[35] For example revenues are now being pumped into other industrial development and into agriculture. Two long-range developmental plans, those of 1966-71 and 1972-82, were launched in an attempt to create new industries. A large petrochemical complex and several smaller processing plants have already commenced production. But despite this, the country's chances for extensive industrialization are small, owing to the scarcity of natural resources (except oil and natural gas) and to the shortages of skilled labour. This explains the fact that while 15 per cent of the labour force is engaged in the non-oil industry, these workers account only for 3 per cent of gross national product.

Far more important during this stage, are commercial activities connected with expediting the thriving import trade, contracts for private and publicly financed construction projects, and the provision of an array of services.[36] The state has stimulated private enterprise by participating in the establishment and financing of new business. The country's extraordinary real estate boom was mainly attributed to the government's policy of purchasing privately owned land at highly inflated prices and selling off valuable city real estate at less than prevailing market prices.[37] It is believed that some 20,000 families have shared some 2.5 billion dollars in the land bonanza, which was managed in such a way that large amounts of the state's oil royalties could eventually reach and benefit most of its citizens. But this did not necessarily mean the even distribution of wealth. The old

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[33] *Ibid.*
[34] M.C. Hudson, *op. cit.*
[35] J.M. Landau, *op. cit.*
[36] A. Al-Marayati, *op. cit.*, p.283.
[37] Fekhri Shehab, *Modernization of the Arab World: Kuwait; A Super Affluent Society* p.135.

oligarchical business families emerged as the major beneficiaries of this diffused wealth. Eighteen of the great Kuwaiti families now monopolize 90 per cent of Kuwait's foreign investment activity. Thus the old oligarchy is now much richer than ever before. The oil revenue completely revolutionized Kuwait's economy, as per capita income rose from $50 in 1946 to $18,000 in 1983, classified that year as the world's fourth highest.[38] Kuwaiti society was dominated by the ruling al-Sabah family and a few important merchant families.[39] A tribalist ideology established and supported a status hierarchy among Kuwaiti clans.[40] It became a British protectorate in 1899 and gained full independence in 1961. Kuwaiti social and political life remained remarkably stable in the face of repeated external intervention from European and regional powers, and pressures from an economy experiencing decades-long stagnation. As oil income flowed into the state, and particularly after the accession of 'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah as amir of Kuwait in 1950, resources were channeled to modernize the local economy and improve the living standards of the population.[41] Investment laws, requiring majority Kuwaiti ownership of local businesses, awarded wealthy and well-connected Kuwaiti partners direct benefits from foreign investment, while the establishment of the first Kuwaiti-owned bank in 1952 consolidated the economic dominance of five of the most powerful merchant clans.[42]

The oil wealth made it possible for Kuwait to develop a welfare system unprecedented in the Middle East and hardly equalled elsewhere in the world. Today Kuwait has an education system and a health service which are totally free. Education and

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[38] *Annual Statistical Abstract*, Ministry of Planning, State of Kuwait, 1987.

[39] Ismael, Kuwait; H. R. P. Dickson. (1956). *Kuwait and Her Neighbours*, London: George Allen and Unwin; H. F. V. Winstone and Zahra Freeth. (1972). *Kuwait: Prospects and Reality*, London: George Allen and Unwin; Abdul-Reda al-Assiri and Kamal al-Manoufi. (1988). "Kuwait's Political Elite: The Cabinet," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 1, Winter, pp. 49-50.

[40] Nicolas Gavrielides. (1987). "Tribal Democracy: The Anatomy of Parliamentary Elections in Kuwait," in Linda Layne, ed., *Elections in the Middle East: Implications of Recent Trends*, Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 153-223; Khaldoun Hasan al-Naqeeb. (1990). *Society and State in the Gulf and Arab Peninsula: A Different Perspective*, trans. by L. M. Kenny, London: Routledge.

[41] Ralph Hewins. (1963). *A Golden Dream: The Miracle of Kuwait*, London: W. H. Allen; John Daniels. (1971). *Kuwait Journey*. Luton, UK: White Crescent Press; Crystal. (1995). 'Oil and Politics in the Gulf', Mary Ann Tetreault, *The Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and the Economics of the New World Order*, Westport, CT: Quorum Books.

[42] Crystal, 'Oil and Politics in the Gulf", *Ibid.*, pp. 89-93.

democratization processes are interrelated and interlinked. As in most countries, educational technology, especially in the teacher-training field, is at a particularly low level. One sometimes wonders if a considerable investment in programmed learning materials and translations of scrambled textbooks might not be a better way of dealing with teacher shortage. Realizing that the issues and problems of Arab education are interconnected and that is it possible to formulate common solutions to them, the Arab leaders in their Khartoum Summit, (18th session, March 2006) issued Resolution 354 in which they charged the Secretary General and Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) to prepare a plan for the development of education in the Arab countries. The ability of societies to fulfill the development tasks they aspires to achieve is connected with a set of policies and programs they set and implement, with the outcome of their awareness of their history and civilizational heritage, the lessons learned from their experiences, their realization of the present and its challenges, their reckoning with the future and its requirements, their conviction that human capital is the basic foundation in the fulfillment of development tasks, and that education is the corner stone in the preparation, training and mobilization of the abilities of human capital, in order to meet national and regional needs.

With the Kuwaiti government's intention to have all services delivered electronically (e-government), companies need training, particularly in information technology (IT) skills, and undoubtedly e-learning has a role to play.[43] An increasing number of companies are responding to the challenge of e-learning and are moving to adopt it, yet are finding significant barriers to adoption hampering their efforts. Although in Western societies the e-learning experience is relatively older, in Kuwait, there is a very limited number of studies on the implementation of e-learning and nearly no research conducted on the barriers encountered by companies using this new training method.[44] It is worth noting

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[43] Ghadah Essa Ali and Rodrigo Magalhaes. (2008). 'Barriers to implementing e-learning: a Kuwaiti case study,' *International Journal of Training and Development*, Vol. 12, No.1, pp. 36-53.

[44] Al-Athari, A. and Zairi, M. (2001), 'Building benchmarking competence through knowledge management capability: an empirical study of the Kuwait context', *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 8, pp. 70–80.

that in the Arab world only 1.2 per cent of the population has access to computers and only half of that number use the Internet.[45]

The closeness of education to development is so intimate that it has become impossible to map development without keeping a very big space for its educational component. If development is a process of continuous growth of societal aim and goals towards civility and human fulfillment, then similarly education is also a process of continuous change and enrichment of its goals and methods in order to make such development possible. For that symbiotic relationship between development and education to be meaningful, both have to be societal related, to be a response to pivotal historic call, and, therefore, be fairly specific and particular. We are then speaking of democratization, liberalization and education of Kuwaiti society and people, at this tragic stage of historical march.

The Arabic language does not allow for any of the distinctions between education, schooling, teaching, training, instruction and upbringing that have been made much of by western philosophers of education working in the analytical tradition, for the words for 'education' in Arabic carry all of these meanings. Independence of thought and personal autonomy do not enter into the Muslim thinking about education, which is more concerned with the progressive initiation of pupils into the received truths of the faith. Seyyed Hossein Nasr points out that in Arabic 'to know' ultimately means 'to be transformed by the very process of knowing'.[46] Ibn Khaldun pours scorn on the man 'who knows about tailoring but does not know tailoring'[47] and al-Ghazali says, Be sure that knowledge alone is no support.... If a man reads a hundred thousand scientific subjects and learns them but does not act upon them, his knowledge is of no use to him, for its benefit lies only in being used.[48]

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[45] Arab Human Development Report-UNDP (2003), *Building a Knowledge Society*. Available at http://www.undp.org/arabstates/ahdr2003.html.

[46] Quoted in Eaton, H. G. (1982) 'Knowledge and the sacred', *The Islamic Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 3, p. 141.

[47] Ibn Khaldun (1967) *The Muqaddimah* (F. Rosenthal, Trans., original work published 1381) (vol. 3). Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, p. 354.

[48] Quoted in al-Taftazani, A.-W. al-G. (1986) 'Islamic education: its principles and aims', *Muslim Education Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 70.

Education may thus be a vehicle for preserving, extending and transmitting a community's or society's cultural heritage and traditional values, but can also be a tool for social change and innovation. The Arab countries' interest in reforming education is reflected in the last three Arab summits which made sure to highlight the subject and placed it at the top of their agendas (the Tunis Summit 2004, Comprehensive reform). In the Algiers Summit, (2005) Arab leaders unanimously agreed to provide compulsory quality education. The Khartoum Summit (2006) called for a radical qualitative change in education and education policies, and called upon the Secretary General of the League of Arab States to submit a comprehensive report on education to the next summit. The Plan which was prepared by the General Secretariat and ALECSO and presented to the Riyadh Summit (March 2007) contained a detailed presentation of the current state of education in the Arab countries and proposals for its development.[49]

Education is a collective responsibility that involves government, the family, civil society and the private sector, and is closely connected with development policies. Civil society is political science shorthand for private voluntary groups, including nongovernmental organizations dedicated to issues such as human rights and good governance. Within both the scholarly and policy communities, civil society is often seen these days as a leading force for democratization. As such groups proliferate, the argument runs, individuals become more assertive in demanding their political rights. Once these demands reach a certain pitch, authoritarian leaders are forced to make meaningful changes or risk being swept away. The policy implications of this theory are neat and tidy: to encourage liberalization in repressive states, simply encourage the growth of civil society.[50] It is not the responsibility of educators alone; responsibilities for it go beyond the national frontiers, and involve the relevant specialized regional and international organizations

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[49] *A Plan for the Development of Education in the Arab Countries: General and Higher Education and Scientific Research*, Tunis 2008, prepared by League of Arab States and Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization.

[50] Steven A. Cook. (2005). 'Way to Promote Arab Reform', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 2, March-April, p.93.

concerned. Education is also an ongoing lifelong social process, with the school as one of its forms.

TABLE I: ARAB HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX, 2009[51]

Countries	HDI Rank	Adult Literacy rate (% aged 15 and older) 1995-2005	Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary education (%) 2005	GDP per capita (PPP US$) 2005	Education Index
Kuwait	33	93.3	74.9	26,321	0.871
UAE	39	88.7	59.9	25,514	0.791
Bahrain	41	86.5	86.1	21,482	0.864
Oman	58	81.4	67.1	15,602	0.843
Saudi Arabia	61	82.9	76.0	15,711	0.844

Education is human development; it provides the learner with the self-learning, communication, mastery, innovation, creativeness, participation and interaction abilities. Education is not subservient to the labor market only; it also generates the latter's domains. Education, in the Arab world, needs comprehensive change of its system, in order to lay the foundations of a modern education based on: Assimilation and appropriation of the foundations of the Arab Islamic civilization, in its authenticity development and mission, its communication with and enrichment of other cultures and civilizations, and its keeping up with the requirements of the age and service to mankind. Despite the achievements made by the Arab countries and mentioned in national and international studies, reports and statistics on the state of education in the Arab countries, and despite the progress and development achieved, the qualitative and quantitative development compared with aspirations and with existing and expected needs are still insufficient to bring about a qualitative change in education. Bringing about radical changes in education in the Arab countries requires that the philosophy of education be

[51] *Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries.* (2009).UNDP-Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS): New York, p.229.

changed, so that (a) building the student's personality becomes an essential axis in the educational process (formation of the cognitive human capital), (b) the student can interact with educational activities according to his/her inclinations, dispositions and capabilities; (c) he can develop his/her spirit of citizenship and belonging, and (d) be educated in human rights, tolerance, coexistence and dialogue, and acceptance of difference and diversity as a right to himself and to others. On the developmental level, the Arab top priority is to develop the performance, and improve the quality of the Arab educational system in order to make it capable of assisting in the achievement of social progress and of contributing to making the Arab economies possess the goods and services they exchanges between themselves, and able to compete at the regional and international levels (See Table I).

Education is generally considered one of the most important influences in moving individuals in developing countries from traditionalism toward modernity. In fact, Inkeles indicates that the amount of formal schooling a man has had emerges as the single most powerful variable in determining his modernity score.[52] This modernity test is not a test of what is learned in school but, rather, "a test of attitudes and values touching on basic aspects of a man's orientation to nature, to time, to fate, to politics, to women and to God."[53] Education provides individuals with the necessary skills which enable them to influence actively the economic and the political structure of a society. The level and extent of men's and women's education in any society determines-to a great extent-the degree of participation in the country's economy. In developing, nonagricultural countries, education is a most significant variable in providing women with access to a wider variety of role repertoires and the opportunity for active participation in the economy of the country. In her study of women in the work force of Islamic countries, Youssef indicated that one of the factors which accounts for low female participation in the non-agricultural labor force is low educational level.[54]

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[52] Alex Inkeles. (1969). "Making Men Modern: On the Causes and Consequences of Individual Change in Six Developing Countries," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 75, No. 2, September, pp. 208-25.
[53] *Ibid.*, pp. 212-13.
[54] Nadia Haggag Youssef. (1974). *Women and Work in Developing Societies*, Population Monograph Series, no. 15, Berkeley: University of California Press.

The spread of education to the children of subordinate groups, a necessary first step to "Kuwaitize" the workforce, promised to challenge the dominance of the merchant families, just as merchant activism challenged the dominance of the ruling family. Those desiring to maintain the legitimacy of their own right to rule the state, the economy, and their families had to face a crucial problem. To reconcile the inconsistencies arising from simultaneously clinging to a tribalist ideology, while presiding over the modernization of a physical and human infrastructure pervaded by cultural diversity and political assumptions increasingly at variance with Kuwaiti tradition, was very difficult indeed. In *Islam and Democracy*, Fatima Mernissi identifies boundary maintenance as having been a primary concern of Islamic and Mediterranean societies for centuries.[55] Mernissi argues throughout her book that modernization poses continual challenges to the psychological, moral, economic, and political boundaries that maintain a particular style of religious and political leadership in the Arab-Islamic world. The relevance of her observations to Kuwait is supported by analysts of the societies of the Gulf region such as Khaldoun Hasan al-Naqeeb.[56] Naqeeb notes that the primary strategy used by the Kuwaiti regime to maintain control of the state is playing social groups one against another as part of a cultural complex he calls "tribalism." In Kuwait, the process of modernization is also a process of boundary transgression.

The education system is one of the main institutions for the production of knowledge; it usually controls the supply of skills and responds to changes in demand made by labor markets. It has, therefore, acquired a more important role in the orientation towards the knowledge economies and in the new reality being imposed by globalization. Consequently, the educational system has begun to revise its structures, objectives, ends and processes, in order to be able to adapt and so meet the human resources demands made by that change. As a result, one can see today that lifelong education programs and other types of educational packages are gaining new momentum whether in terms of density (interest in night/on the job classes in higher and vocational education), or in

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[55] Fatima Memissi. (1992). *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, trans. by Mary Jo Lakeland. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, pp. 6-8.
[56] Al-Naqeeb, 1993, *Op. Cit.*

terms of provision of education using new technologies (distance education). Furthermore, there are many structural responses to the increasing demand on teaching and learning as can be seen in the increasing number of regional colleges and university extensions, the rapid expansion of graduate studies programs, the palpable phenomenon of excellence centers of quality education that responds to the new reality of the knowledge economy. On the other hand, cross-specializations educational programs have began to appear in which the student (particularly the university student) belongs to more than one faculty or studies program, in accordance with agreed upon systems to collect and evaluate credit points and courses, and to transfer them from one educational institution to another.

Despite the increasing number of graduates, the quality level and adequacy of these graduates to the needs of development for high technical labour remain insufficient. In addition, the large majority of these graduates come from the faculties of letters and humanities, and there is not much demand for them in the labour market. This situation has led to a currently large increase in the number of unemployed graduates in most of the Arab countries, which represents a great challenge to higher education. This problem will likely be aggravated during the first quarter of the third millennium following the consolidation of globalisation, the liberalization of trade and the relative liberalization of labour mobility between countries through multinational companies. Arab authoritarianism could no longer be viewed as a source of stability; instead, it was the primary threat to it. To "drain the swamp" that had incubated Islamist radicals such as Osama bin Laden, it became critical to promote political liberalization, even democratization, in the Arab world, and this goal became a central feature of U.S. national security policy.[57] As unemployment rates increased and job opportunities became more scarce, the government has been targeting the private sector as a partner for the build-up of the nation. Thus, the private sector has become more active in the economy of Kuwait in the last two decades, with examples of success in the petrochemical industry, banking, investment and insurances services, construction as well as communication. Private schooling is available in Kuwait but the Government subsidy

[57] Steven A. Cook. (2005). 'Way to Promote Arab Reform', *Op. Cit.*, p.91.

on it has been removed.[58] Most of the challenges facing the private sector are similar to those found in other Arab countries with regard to capturing market share and increasing profitability.[59]

The skilled resident foreigner in Kuwait has helped very much in enabling society to mobilize for rapid political modernization. The typical resident alien is associated with the salaried middle class which has played such a dominant role in enhancing the modernization process throughout the Middle East.[60] J.M. Landau describes him as 'the cultural mediator whose role in social change is indispensable and unavoidable'.[61]

In order to analyse these tendencies which result from the influx of foreign skills into the country, it is necessary to examine the defensive measures undertaken by the government on behalf of its citizens. The most important of these was the Naturalization Decree of December 1959, which restricted Kuwaiti citizenship to those residents, and their heirs, who had lived in the state continuously since 1920.[62] The decree was subjected to amendment in 1960 to permit the naturalization of 50 aliens each year, after ten years residence if they were Arab nationals, and after fifteen years if they were non-Arab. The impact of the naturalization act was reinforced by the electoral law of 1962, which denied the non-native-born citizens who had been naturalized since 1952 the right of participating in national elections. The right to vote was restricted to only Kuwaiti citizens. Kuwaiti defensiveness was also exemplified in the regulations that reserve all senior civil service posts, civil service tenure, and exemptions from civil service examinations to citizens.[63] The purchase and exchange of land as well as commercial dealings are officially restricted to Kuwaiti citizens alone.

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[58] Al Yahya, Mohammad A. (1993). *Kuwait: Fall and Rebirth*, London: Kegan Paul International, p.120.
[59] Al-Kazemi, A. and Ali, A. (2002), 'Managerial problems in Kuwait', *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 366–75.
[60] See Faisal El Salem and Ahmed Jamal. (1983). 'Labour in Arabian Gulf Countries', *Journal of Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies*, Kuwait University, pp.281-293; and M.M. Aziz. (1984). "The Impact of Demographic Changes in Kuwait 1975-1980', *Journal of Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies*, July, pp.13-73
[61] J.M. Landau, *op. cit.*
[62] Al-Marayati, *op. cit.*, p. 287.
[63] See D.M. Al-Deftari. (1980). 'Labour Problems in Kuwait and Qatar', *Journal of Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies*, Kuwait University, July, pp.67-109; and A.M. Salmi. (1976). 'The System of Civil Service in Kuwait', *Journal of Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies*, Jan., pp.27-57.

The above measures have been effective in achieving their aim. They have created a sharp distinction between the two classes of society: the citizens and the aliens. They have made it possible for the former to reap all the benefits of the oil boom, with the lion's share going to the relatively small highly affluent group within this class.[64] On the other hand, they have antagonized the most efficient and indispensable element in the country: the resident foreigners. Their state of insecurity and hence their frustration is best projected by Landau: . . . Uprooted, often separated from his family, insecure and unsettled. He has now become envious and resentful. With little or no hope of being permanently integrated into the community, he is left without any sense of allegiance to Kuwait. Their lack of participation in political life of the country and their less privileged socio-economic status make them a potential threat to stability; and this fact, in turn, could obstruct political development. Whereas the resident aliens are by and large more accultured to modern ways, the Kuwaiti nationals are more privileged in terms of political influence. This communal situation is analogous to that of Jordan or Nigeria, where the political elite originates in the more traditional sector . . .[65] Within the framework of this fragmented political culture, the foreign majority are subject to the state but not psychologically members of the nation. As long as this identity crisis persists, legitimacy will be difficult to achieve. On the other hand, the presence of a middle-class foreign elite has been a major catalyst to achieving modernization and liberalization.

To stay competitive in today's business environment and face global competition, a continuous stream of new skills, tools and knowledge is needed in Kuwait's economy, particularly when it is recognized that shortages in a skilled workforce is one of the largest barriers to growth. Despite the high standards of living, Kuwait is falling behind other countries because of its relatively poor innovation and productivity capabilities. Thus, it is important that corporations continually work on updating and upgrading their employees' skills and provide continued training not only to their personnel but to their customers and suppliers as well.[66]

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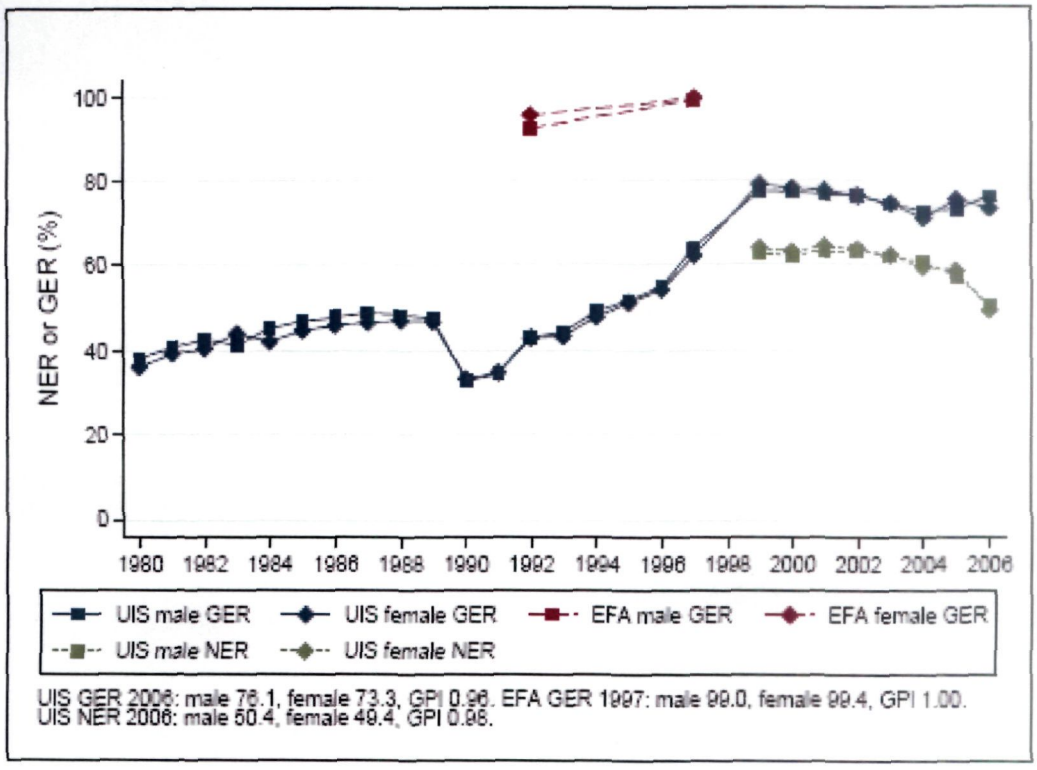
[64] H.A. El Ebraheam, *op. cit.*, p.121.
[65] J.M. Landau, *op. cit.*,
[66] *Ibid.*

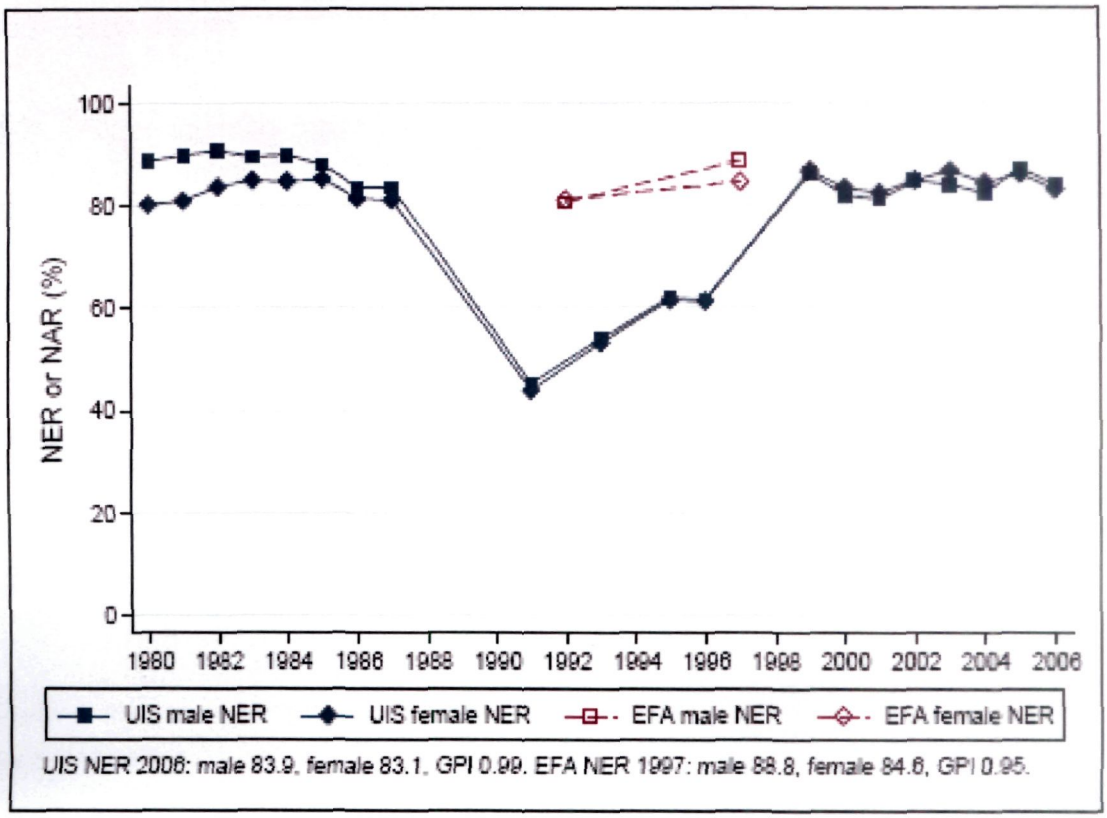
In 2003, the Kuwait government implemented the National Manpower Support Law aimed at increasing the number of citizens migrating to the private sector. According to joint statistics provided by the Public Authority for Civil Information and by the Restructuring Manpower Program and State Executive Body in 2005, the labour force in Kuwait reached 1.63 million at end of April 2005, with Kuwaitis representing 18.3 per cent of the total. In the private sector, there are approximately 1,261,490 employees, with Kuwaitis representing nearly 2.4 per cent of the total up to July 2005, with an increase of 132.7 per cent compared to figures for 2000 (Kuwait Ministry of Planning, 2005). Statistics of manpower published in the al Qabas newspaper in February 2005 revealed that 54,241 newly appointed employees have joined the workforce in different corporations during the past six years (Kuwait Ministry of Planning, 2005).[67]

GRAPH I: PRE-PRIMARY ENROLLMENT IN KUWAIT[68]



GRAPH II: PRIMARY ATTENDANCE AND ENROLLMENT IN KUWAIT

[67] Kuwait Ministry of Planning (2005), *Annual Statistics*, Kuwait: Ministry of Planning Publications.
[68] UNICEF, Division of Policy and Practice, *Statistics and Monitoring Section*, www.childinfo.org, May 2008.



Within the Arab countries, the percentage of children accessing kindergartens varies greatly (1% in Yemen and 99% in Kuwait (for example). As Graph I and II on pre-pre-primary and primary attendance/enrollment in Kuwait from the year 1980 to 2006 clearly depicts. This is mainly due to the difference in wealth and in the ability to build and finance such institutions. The sex typing of fields of study is a worldwide phenomenon,[69] yet it varies between countries. For example, 51.6% of engineering students are women in Kuwait, compared with 3.3% in Switzerland and Japan (UNESCO 1995).

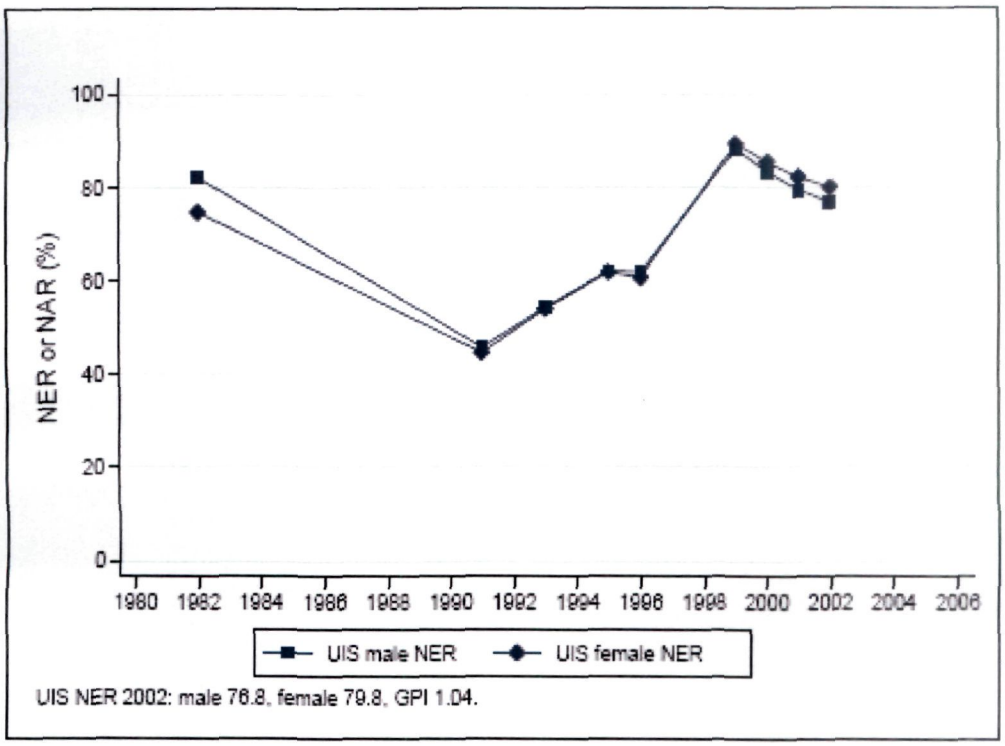
A Plan for the Development of Education in the Arab Countries: General and Higher Education and Scientific Research, Tunis 2008, prepared by League of Arab States and Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, called upon the Arab countries not to bind themselves by any additional commitments regarding the liberalization of trade in education through the GATT and the International Trade

[69] Moore, K.M. (1987). 'Women's Access and Opportunity in Higher Education', *Comparative Education*, Vol. 23, pp. 23-34.

Organization, and calling on the Arab governments to abide by the UNESCO accords they have ratified, and to be guided by the provisions of the Declaration of the International Conference on Higher Education, in addition to commissioning ALECSO to open an Arab dialogue on this matter in order to reach a collective negotiation attitude to increase benefits and reduce consequences and risks.

Oil-related wealth has produced marked improvements in the education of girls.[70] In Kuwait, for example, elementary and secondary education (See Graph-III for secondary attendance and enrollment for both sexes) is universal for both sexes, and women attend college in larger numbers than do men.[71]

GRAPH-III: SECONDARY ATTENDANCE AND ENROLLMENT IN KUWAIT

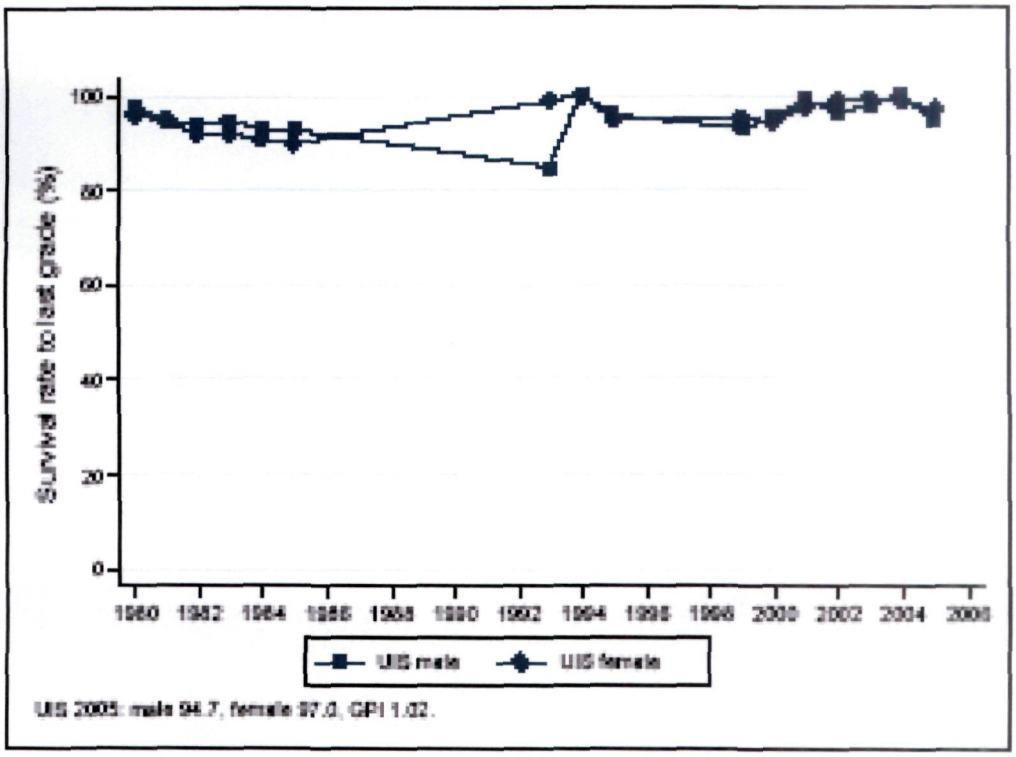


[70] S. K. Farsoun (1988). `Oil, state and social structure in the Middle East', *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 166.

[71] El-Sanabary, N. (1993). 'Middle East and North Africa'. In *Women's Education in Developing Countries: Barriers, Benefits and Policies*, ed. EM King, MA Hill, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 136-74.

In Kuwait, where in 1981 a sweeping law made literacy compulsory for everyone aged 14 to 44, rewarded them with job incentives, made it illegal to hire or promote an illiterate and threatened to sue those who refuse to participate or fail to attend classes regularly, the illiteracy rate in 1985 was 25.5% down slightly from 32.5% in 1980. Nevertheless, it should be noted that new campaigns are continually being launched at both the national and Pan-Arabic levels. For survival to last grade, Graph IV clearly depicts the achievement of the government of Kuwait in bringing in inclusive policies of education which helps in the enabling processes of democratization.

GRAPH IV: SURVIVAL TO LAST GRADE IN KUWAIT[72]



Mary Ann Tetreault examines modern Kuwaiti politics from the societal perspective. The result is an extensive exploration of opposition politics in Kuwait and a novel contribution to the study of the modern Gulf countries. "Public finances are one of the

[72] UNICEF, Division of Policy and Practice, *Statistics and Monitoring Section*, www.childinfo.org, May 2008

best starting points for an investigation of society, especially though not exclusively of its political life."[73] This classic statement by the Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter comprises the starting point for much of the analysis of Kuwaiti politics by political scientists. Tribe, culture and religion all took a back seat to the more important effect oil revenues had on Kuwaiti political life. The decline of the historic opposition role of Kuwait's merchants and the rise of new social groups in the 1970s (Islamists, Shia, bedouin) could all be explained by examining the tremendous capacity oil monies imparted to the Kuwaiti state. Consequently, a great deal of social science research focused on the structure of the Kuwaiti state and how it was integrated into the world oil market. When Kuwaiti was considered, it was as a reflection of the oil-rich state -- what Hazem Beblawi termed "the rentier society." The intent was to make sense of the observation that despite becoming one of the world's richest countries, Kuwait nevertheless failed to modernize in the classic sense; no middle class, no democracy. Tetreault's work departs from this dependent societal view to stress instead "the agency of individuals" and the opposition's ability to push the democratization envelope. Tetreault lays out a sophisticated framework for tracing how battles over power and authority in Kuwait reflect interpretations of the meaning of democracy and its progress. At the core of this framework is the idea of "political space." This is the conceptual arena in which individuals and groups in society make and remake themselves to expand their own freedom of action and capacities. That this democratization and liberalization process should revolve around Kuwait's furtive experiments with elected representation and opposition efforts at expansion is natural.

Though one success of structural theories was to account for the lack of classic modernization in Kuwait, part of Tetreault's analysis is to show how modernity has nevertheless penetrated. Opposition and loyalty to the regime are intertwined, not stagnant. For anyone who has conducted research in Kuwait, the paradoxes are well known. One the one hand, research access and informed individuals for interview are among the best in the region. On the other hand, each discussion only seems to add to the

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[73] Mary Ann Tetreault (2000). *Stories of Democracy: Politics and Society in Contemporary Kuwait*. New York: Columbia University Press.

complexity of domestic political struggles. The author is honest about the fact that the stories presented (interpretations and perspectives on 1990s Kuwaiti politics) do not represent all of even such a small country as Kuwait. Tetreault highlights "the ability of citizens to carve out spheres of autonomy is extensive."[74] Even the strategy of "desertification" (a regime effort to supplant the liberal opposition with more loyal bedouin and tribal elements in the 1980s) is deemed to have failed. However, despite these apparent advances, Tetreault admits that the government successfully bypassed many opposition efforts and really only delivered on the promise to hold elections after liberation. But are the machinations and powers of the elected parliament of the 1990s really different from their predecessors in the 1960s and early 1970s? Certainly, a key indicator is the composition of the prime minister's Cabinet clearly shows that the opposition has made little headway there. So, did opposition agency fail, or did the regime's divide-and-rule tactics overwhelm the opposition?[75] The focus on agency does bracket any useful discussion of structural change that may provide firmer conclusions. Such change can reveal many of the interests upon which most agency is presumably exercised. Consider one hint, the problematic role of the Kuwaiti business elite. The original liberal opposition leaders of the first parliamentary movement in the region and possessors of significant agency capabilities, business elites, according to Tetreault, were the primary victims of the desertification strategy. Though figures like Abdul Aziz al-Saqr were prominent in opposition efforts to force post-liberation elections, Tetreault argues that "merchant interests work against the coherence of the opposition."[76] Why this change? Oddly, there is little discussion of actual merchant agency, rather it is their growing internal divisions that are to blame for their lack of opposition. However, if we consider the role of structural change and realize that agency need not always entail action against the government, a different picture comes into focus. The position in which Kuwaiti Islamists find themselves; expanding civil society through political opposition yet limiting those gains "by acquiescing to the rulers."[77] Tetreault regards a more pluralistic view of Kuwaiti politics and struggles for greater democratization. Tetreault

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[74] *Ibid.*, p. 184.
[75] *Ibid.*, p. 227.
[76] *Ibid.*, p.130.
[77] *Ibid.*, p. 227.

builds intra-comparative conclusions for why Kuwait stands apart from other Arab countries and why, ultimately, the chances for an Arab democracy remain best in this small corner of the Gulf.

PROCESSES OF DEMOCRATIZATION IN KUWAIT: POLITICAL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

There is no single path to democracy. While the general concepts comes from the West, the machinery of implemention must be developed to reflect the tradition, history, and general social environment of each country. No one theory of democracy suits every situation in every country. The English constitution suits England, while Kuwaiti history defines the opportunities and limitations of democracy in Kuwait. Kuwaitis find the expansion of democracy to be a painful, difficult, and slow process. This is so not because those who govern refuse to allow democracy but because a changing of attitudes takes time, plenty of time. Kuwait is one of the very few states in the Middle East with a written constitution, separation of powers, rights of free speech, fair elections, and a parliament with a genuinely popular mandate. Its government is probably the only one in the Middle East not holding political prisoners. If democracy is an active peaceful engagement of debate through channels safeguarded by a constitution accepted and adhered to by all, then Kuwait is a democratic society with a democratic government. That said, it is not a full-fledged democracy, nor, frankly, should it become one. Kuwait is an Arab and Islamic society, not a fully modernized Western society; no apology is needed for that. Though the idea of Western-style democracy is supported by a good number of people and groups in Kuwait, important factors limit the growth of full-fledged Western democracy in Kuwait.

Until the 1950s, Kuwait was a traditional Persian Gulf society with a small population and very limited resources. While the country's oil potential was recognized toward the end of World War II, the influx of oil money did not come until the time of independence from Great Britain in 1961. However small Kuwait's population (around 1.2 million today), the country contains a complex fabric of religious, tribal, family, and ideological interest groups. Democracy emerged in Kuwait not so much because of merchant family

involvement in politics (a widely held view), but due to such factors as the country's geographical location, the enlightenment of its rulers, its oil wealth, and its accepting the ideas of Arab naturalism.

Kuwait's formal experience with democracy began with two primitive assemblies, one convened in 1920, and the other in 1938. Neither of these early experiences with representative government lasted very long but they established a model, and they have in turn become a part of Kuwait's democratic tradition. In particular, they influenced the 1962 constitution, one of the most democratic in spirit to be found in the Middle East. This constitution combines popular and royal authority; it provides for a freely elected National Assembly with broad legislative powers, while giving the emir some legislative authority too. The National Assembly's real authority means that Kuwait is not an absolute monarchy, while the emir's many powers make him more than a constitutional monarch. The 1962 constitution remains in force today, an indication of its suitability to Kuwait. The country's first constitution (1962) accorded the Emir broad executive powers, as well as legislative power, which he shares with a popularly elected National Assembly (parliament).

In addition to the National Assembly, the constitution provides other freedoms and rights essential to a democracy, including freedom of practicing religion and freedom of the press. Kuwait today has one of the most free presses in the Arab world; political issues are discussed openly and frankly, and wide-ranging debates are conducted in the press by advocates of varying political positions. Kuwait has five daily newspapers published in Arabic and two in English, in addition to several weekly or monthly publications covering political events. While liberal in spirit, the constitution has also legitimated laws limiting political activity and given the executive branch very broad powers, so much so that tension between the government and National Assembly dominates the political culture of Kuwait. The Sabah family points out that it has modernized and liberalized the political system far beyond what any other traditional ruling family in the Gulf Cooperation Council has done, giving the people a wide space to govern themselves while itself participating much more in politics. But the family also feels entitled to extensive powers and privileges. This has led a portion of the opposition, ever-shifting in

its composition, to try to undermine the legitimacy of the Al Sabah (the ruling family). They approach politics with a zero-sum mentality: anything that enhances the family's position is bad. This has caused many political crises in Kuwait; with luck, the opposition will outgrow this attitude and cooperate where possible, for in the end Kuwaiti democracy can survive only if the executive and legislative branches work together.

Indeed, the Emir's suspensions of the National Assembly in 1976 and 1986 responded mainly to outside events. However unfortunate the two suspensions, they do not appear to have had a long-term impact. Rather, the method of curing the ills of democracy with more democracy is working. Through three decades, Kuwait has been an oasis of liberalism in a desert of dictatorship and autocracy.

The Kuwaiti Parliament acts as a partial check on the powers of the ruler but its influence is undermined by a series of restrictions imposed by the executive on political and civil liberties. The broad powers wielded by the Emir enabled him to suspend parliament from 1976 to 1981; then again from 1986 up until 1992, when it was restored after the invading Iraqis were driven out in 1991.

To restore democracy after the Iraqi invasion, in an effort to leave behind the old winner-take-all outlook and become more pluralistic, individuals with opposing political viewpoints have begun taking steps to demonstrate that their differences do not stand in the way of their shared commitment to democracy. Despite disagreements in outlook and ideology, an alliance of seven opposition groups, hoping to learn from past mistakes, agreed in 1992 on a common pre-election program to protect the integrity of the campaign and thus assure a democratic process. Opposition in this campaign meant being against some of the government's current policies, not the structure of the government itself. In fact, the 1992 elections showed a new spirit of comity in Kuwaiti politics; Islamic groups and liberal groups acted far more maturely than in the past.

The 1992 election results showed strong support for three Islamic groups, two Sunni and one Shi`a, which together won twenty-two out of fifty seats. Tribal representatives, both

pro-government and in the Islamic opposition, did well, and a good number of independents in the moderate opposition won seats. Liberals and non-tribal pro-government candidates, however, did poorly. Although the assembly has a majority of opposition members, they are very much divided in their goals. To represent these many viewpoints, the prime minister selected six elected members, including liberals, fundamentalists, Shi`a, and tribal leaders, to serve in the cabinet.

The Kuwaiti public has a number of political priorities in mind: balance the budget, reform and restructure the economy, modernize education, expand the law on citizenship and freedom of the press, cut back on government bureaucracy, implement privatization, and (above all) assure the country's external security. These problems, and especially the issue of balancing the budget and restructuring the economy, demand some action on the part of the government and the assembly. Yet these and a score of other issues are still pending. For this, the public blames both the government and the National Assembly. Instead of tackling Kuwait's real problems, the parliamentarians have devoted a great deal of energy to the issue of women wearing the veil and to changing an article of the constitution to make the *Shari`a* (the sacred law of Islam) not just a principal source of legislation but the only source of legislation. A good number of people feel that these are marginal issues and that the groups promoting these issues are seeking ideological gains at the expense of Kuwait's welfare. Democratization will not benefit the majority unless the opposition parties and opinion leaders abandon their old style of radical confrontation with the government and adopt a policy of coexistence.

Since 1991, Kuwait remains the only Gulf country with a legislature that serves as a strong check on executive power. It is also the only Arab parliament that forced cabinet ministers to resign, and succeeded in passing legislation over strong objections from the Royal Family and the reigning ruler, such as the law that required segregation of universities by gender. The Assembly is strong enough to force executive concessions by withholding approval of bills, which are submitted by the government until it yields on other key issues. The drawback of this legislative strength is that it frequently creates a deadlock between the government and the legislature that slows the pace of economic and other reforms. A striking example of this is that in 2004 Parliament, led by the

Islamists and conservative tribal members, defeated for the third time the government sponsored bill that would have given women, along with the Bedouin the right to vote and run in parliamentary and municipal elections. However, in May 2005 the National Assembly finally granted women the right to vote and run for office, and later the government appointed several women to serve on the municipal council. Islamist MPs amended the law granting women the vote to mandate that women behave according to Shari'a law while participating in politics.

Political parties are banned; however, several political blocks —with well known affiliations— exist and are active in the National Assembly. But even if parties in the West Asia do not manifest the same features as parties in the West, and even if most of them operate under political and military stresses, they still warrant study as examples of political behaviour, either by the regimes or by the public.[78] The Kuwaiti government does permit civic groups to be politically active, but in January 2005 when a group of Salafi Islamists attempted to establish an opposition party (Hizb al-Umma), they were charged with planning to overthrow the regime as well as violating laws of association and the press. They were later interrogated, released on bail, and their case was never tried. The last national elections took place on 26/7/2003 and were free and fair. Some 246 candidates competed for the 50 parliamentary seats, and voter turnout was 81%. The results showed a solid representation of the traditional tribal groups. The 'Islamists maintained their same representation of 15 seats while the liberal block suffered a considerable defeat when most of its leaders lost their seats. This vibrant contestation for the legislature is all the more remarkable considering that political parties are banned. Universal suffrage does not exist since women continue to be denied the vote in national elections (but permitted in municipal ones).

On January 15, 2006, Sheikh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir died and was succeeded by the infirm crown prince, Sheikh Saad al-Abdallah al-Salim. After internal negotiations, Sheikh Saad was in turn succeeded by Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmed al-Jabir.

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[78] The first study of political parties in the West Asia came out in 1994. See Frank Tachau (1994). ed, *Political Parties of the Middle East and North Africa*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

The Kuwaiti parliament is largely seen as responsible for forcing this second succession, an unusual display of power by a legislative body in a Gulf monarchy. The new cabinet contains one woman, who had been appointed in 2005.

Due to widespread vote rigging, a movement began in May 2006 to consolidate Kuwait's 25 electoral districts into 5 larger constituencies, in order to make vote buying and election fraud more difficult, but more importantly, to make elections more nationally oriented and less based on sectarian or tribal considerations. Additionally, larger constituencies would make the districts more broadly representative and less influenced by tribal or sectarian factors. Early elections were held under the old system, but women were able to participate for the first time, though none of the 28 female candidates that ran were elected, although women comprise 57% of Kuwait's 345,000 eligible voters. Voter turnout was 65%, though only 35% among female voters. Opposition candidates, part of an uneasy coalition of Islamists, liberals and populists, won 33 out of 50 seats.

The Judiciary system is not entirely independent, as the judges are appointed by the Emir for limited terms and renewal of their tenure is subject to governmental approval. However, frequently the courts rule against the government, as happened, for example, when the Court of Appeal overturned in December 2004 a primary Court prison sentence against a religious leader accused of insulting the Emir. Trials are open and relatively fair, and defendants can appeal verdicts and are entitled to legal counsel. Arbitrary arrests and detention are rare; and suspects can only be detained for 4 days in police custody before being brought before an investigating official. Prisons, according to U.S. State Department reports "meet or exceed international standards." Misdemeanors and felonies are tried in secular courts, while Islamic courts deal with personal status cases and family issues, with Sunni and Shi'a Muslims having separate Shari'a courts.

FUNCTIONING OF KUWAITI PARLIAMENT

Kuwait has twenty-five election districts, each of which elects two members. Thus, the National Assembly has fifty elected members. In addition, it has between eleven and sixteen other members, that is, cabinet ministers who serve ex-officio in the National Assembly. The constitution does not allude to the creation of political parties, neither approving of nor prohibiting them. In theory, the government does not allow them to exist, though political "groups" *(tajammu`at)* with overt political views do exist and

fulfill the role of parties elsewhere. They cannot, however, form a government; that is the right of the prime minister, who is appointed by the Emir.

Kuwait's first parliamentary election took place in 1963, and its most recent occurred in October 1992. All of the seven general elections have been ruled free and fair, with the possible exception of one election in 1967. Not only does the emir not determine election results in advance, but government-endorsed candidates very frequently lose. Kuwait's National Assembly thus is considered to represent the will of the Kuwaiti people--in contrast to so many Parliaments in the Arab world.

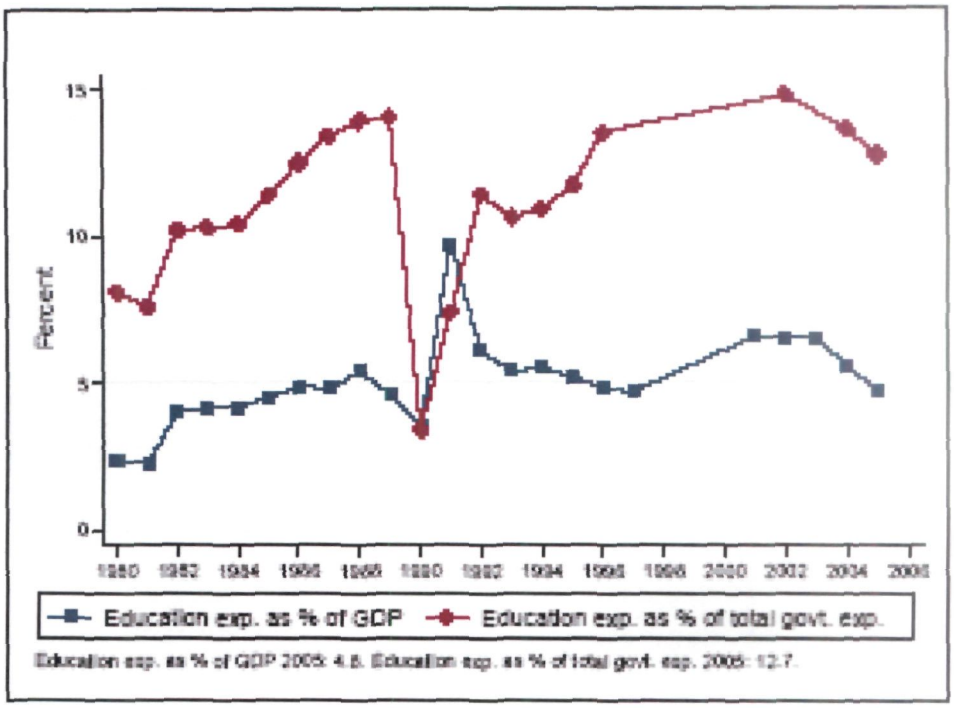
The Emir traditionally chooses the Crown Prince as prime minister, making the prime minister always a leading member of the ruling Sabah family (today, he is Shaikh Sa`d, a cousin of Emir Jabir al-Ahmad as-Sabah). Members of the ruling family do not run for office, so the prime minister is never an elected member of the assembly. The prime minister has so far always made up his cabinet mostly from the ruling family and other figures not in the National Assembly, though the constitution requires that at least one member of the cabinet be an elected member of the assembly. In years past, the cabinet in fact contained only one or two elected members of the assembly; today it includes five of them. The emir can dissolve the assembly, which he did for two long periods, 1976-80 and 1986-92.

Kuwait's constitution makes all cabinet officers also members of the assembly with full voting rights; today, then, the Assembly has sixty-one members, fifty elected and eleven appointed. Appointed members bias voting somewhat in the government's favor, but it is by no means rare for the assembly to vote against the government. More commonly, the government designs its legislative bills to accommodate the members' wishes so they will pass. The constitution also permits the assembly to cast a vote of no confidence in a minister; initiate a policy of no-cooperation with the prime minister; question ministers and investigate government conduct; establish investigative committees; and discuss any issue that it finds appropriate.

By authority of a law passed after liberation, the assembly's Accounting Office provides independent supervision of expenditures of public funds. Today, committees are actively investigating various financial scandals, especially difficulties experienced by the

Kuwaiti office in charge of investments abroad. In all, Kuwaitis know far more about their government's expenditures than the citizens of most other countries in the region. The expenditure on education has gone up above 4.5 per cent which was below 3 per cent in 1980 (for clear picture see Graph V). The political impact of this lavish welfare system, combined with the state's policy of guaranteeing employment for all citizens, has been to blunt the potential appeal of revolutionary ideologies, at least among the native-born. The dazzling speed with which Kuwait underwent change from a community of tradesmen and pearl divers to a booming oil centre posed major socio-cultural problems which accompanied the spectacular economic change.[79] While Kuwait has risen to political prominence, it faces a major challenge which, in the view of some, is seriously detrimental to its long-term development, namely, the absence of a well-trained cadre of skilled workers. This problem has been dealt with by importing skilled labour from abroad, with preference being given to Arab nationals.

GRAPH V: EDUCATION EXPENDITURE IN KUWAIT[80]



[79] Ibid.
[80] UNICEF, Division of Policy and Practice, *Statistics and Monitoring Section*, www.childinfo.org, May 2008

DEMOCRATIZATION, CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

The concept of democratization and liberalization has dominated political literature and has stimulated vivid discussion among contemporary scholars. Preoccupation with questions of modernization, however, is not new. It began in Europe in the latter part of the nineteenth century after the consequences of industrialization had become apparent. So altered was the character of Western society that it became a model (or at least a standard) for comparison with societies elsewhere. Today's emphasis is mainly on the democratization of nations and thus on development of their own forms of national polity, the main object of which is to increase the social product and to provide an increasingly fair share of that product for all citizens. From this viewpoint, the political systems that have attracted the most attention have been the traditional monarchies. The experience of these traditional monarchies highlights many of the dilemmas of political modernization and the processes of democratization which in less dramatic form confront other types of states as well. Most of these monarchies exist today in countries which are beginning to undergo rapid liberalization and cultural change. Democracy in Kuwait is seen by its participants, both government and to some extent the political groupings, as limited to the electoral process.[81] The Constitution provides for freedom of association and assembly. But these freedoms in practice are limited. All NGOs must obtain a license and register in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MOSAL), which maintains a close control on all organizations and is empowered to dissolve any association if it deems its activity inappropriate or if it has misused its financial resources. Public gatherings require prior governmental approval, but in practice, however, associations organize informally, and informal social gatherings, called diwainyas, provide a forum for political debate and discussion. There are 52 licensed NGOs, but since 1985 MOSAL has granted only a very limited number of new licenses. Registration requests of about 95 NGO are pending. However, hundreds of unlicensed associations operate without hindrance. Licensed NGOs receive government funding that cover operating expenses. In October 2004 the government licensed the first human rights association. In addition, it

[81] Ghanim Alnajjar. (2000). 'The Challenges Facing Kuwaiti Democracy', *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 54. No. 2, Spring, p. 252.

created a committee composed of intellectuals, professionals, and religious leaders, to devise strategies to combat extremist Islamic ideologies. Sachedina distinguishes between exclusive versus inclusive interpretations of Islam. He writes that the 'fundamental problem, as reflected in the classical formulation of Muslim political identity, is religious authoritarianism founded on an exclusive salvific claim, which runs contrary to the global spirit of democratization emerging through the acknowledgment of religious pluralism.'[82]

Though demonstrations are discouraged, there were a few peaceful public demonstrations, which the government allowed without interference. In 2005, women's organizations and their supporters held numerous demonstrations in front of parliament demanding the right to vote. The "Orange Movement" protests, which occurred in May 2006 in favor of redistricting, were largely peaceful with only one injury reported. Trade unions and professional syndicates are permitted provided only one exists per industry or profession. Private sector workers have a limited right to strike, but foreign domestic laborers, who comprise one-third of the non citizen workforce, may not associate or organize. Since government subsidizes 90% of the expenses of labor unions the latter are deeply influenced by the state.

On May 1, Kuwait's Constitutional Court revoked as unconstitutional 15 clauses of the Public Gatherings Law No. 65 of 1979, which restricted public gatherings without prior permission from the authorities. Observers believe this ruling sets a precedent in Kuwait by challenging the emergency powers of the Emir; historically the Constitutional Court has shied away from ruling on the constitutionality of laws issued in the absence of parliament.

The broadcast media is government owned, but the press is privately owned and is permitted a wide margin of freedom of expression. Several laws allow the government to indict journalists on a variety of offenses. The law permits the government to shut down any publication and arrest its writers on such vague charges as "distortion of public moral

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[82] Abdulaziz Sachedina (2001).*The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism*, New York: Oxford University Press, p.41.

principles," "denial of God and his prophets," "harming the national interest" or "seeking the fragmentation of society." But this law has rarely been applied and none were ever convicted under its terms. On May 15, journalist, Hamid Buyabis was imprisoned for criticizing the Emir, and on November 20, Khalid Obaysan al-Mutairi was imprisoned for writing an article that seemed to support Saddam Hussein as the legitimate leader of Iraq. Both journalists were released after only a day in jail. The press regularly criticizes the government and its domestic and foreign policies. But direct criticism of the Emir is avoided through self-censorship. The government has proposed a legislation that would set a limit to the number of newspapers that are licensed each year, but strong protest from journalists has so far held up passage of the bill.

The Kuwaiti parliament approved a new press law on March 6, which replaces the 1961 press and publications law. The new law prohibits the arrest and detention of journalists until a final court verdict is delivered by the Supreme Court. It allows citizens whose applications for newspaper licenses are rejected to sue the government in court (the 1961 law gave applicants the right to appeal only to the government itself). While the new law prohibits the closure of publications without a final court verdict, publications may be suspended for up to two weeks for investigation. It also bans jailing journalists for all but religious offenses, criticisms of the Emir, and calls to overthrow the government, stipulating up to one year in jail for these offenses and fines ranging between US$17,000 and US$70,000. The Ministry of the Interior (MOI) censors all books, films, periodicals, videotapes, and other imported publications deemed morally offensive as well as the media for political content. The MOI controlled the publication and distribution of all informational materials and did not grant licenses to political magazines. Internet service and foreign satellite TV access is unhindered.

Islam in Kuwait is the State religion. Sunni and Shia Muslims worship freely, as do the 150,000 Christians. Members of religions not sanctioned in the Qu'ran such as Sikhs, Hindus, Baha'is and Buddhists may practice their religion freely in private but are not allowed to build public places of worship. Despite the fact that 30% of the population is Shi'a, the government licenses few Shi'a mosques; as a consequence the Shi'a have only

36 mosques compared to 1300 Sunni mosques. The teaching of non-Muslim faiths is not permitted in schools or public places, and is limited only to the confines of certain officially recognized churches and private homes. Quotas exist on the amount of staff that churches are allowed to bring from abroad, and it is now near impossible to build new churches to serve the ever-growing community of expatriate Christians in the country who number over 300,000. The Greek Catholic (Melkite) Church went through a protracted struggle with the municipal Council to secure a piece of land on which to build a new church. The request was eventually denied on July 8, 2006. The issue caused a number of prominent parliamentarians and religious figures to vociferously condemn the idea of building more churches in the country. Proselytizing to Muslims is banned.

DEMOCRATIZATION, WOMEN AND THE MARGINALIZED

Researchers agree that Arab society has traditionally assigned and continues to assign a subordinate political, economic and social status to women. However, there is disagreement on the origins of this situation. Arab writers are divided over whether or not women's statuses are tied in with Islam or with misinterpretations of Islam.[83] Additionally, Barakat (1993) points out that the subordination of women is probably associated more with the prevailing social order, its division of labor, ownership patterns, and production processes than with cultural and psychological tendencies. If influential, culture and psychology would have intervening or interaction effects. The various points of disagreement among scholars studying Islam and women's social place point out the need for systematic, empirical research specifying relationships which include the social structure, such as status variables, organizational and personal network ties, and historical experience. These variables are used routinely as controls in analyses of the impact of religion on attitudes about including or excluding various groups.[84] Various reasons, both

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[83] Al-Aqqad, Abbas M. (1971). *Al-Mar'afial al-Qur'an (The women in the Koran)*. Cairo: Dar al-Hilal. (Arabic); Mernissi, Fatima. (1975). *Beyond the veil: Male-female dynamics in a modern Muslim society*. New York: Schenkwan Publishing.; El-Saadawi, Nawal.(1982). *The hidden face of Eve*. Boston: Beacon Press.

[84] For example, see Billiet, Jaak B. (1995). 'Church involvement, individualism, and ethnic prejudice among Catholics: New evidence of a moderating effect'. *Journal for the Scientific Study Religion*, Vol. 34, pp.224-33; Eisinga, Rob, Rubin Konig, and Peer Scheepers. (1995). 'Orthodox religious belief and anti-Semitism: A replication of Glock and Stark in the Netherlands'. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. Vol. 34, pp. 214-23.

political and empirical,[85] make systematic study of Islamic nations difficult. Some are not amenable to social scientific research, especially surveys, while others, such as Kuwait, are more receptive. Also, much existing research focuses on the ruling elite of Islamic nations[86] or employs student populations.[87] Large surveys of randomly sampled populations are less common. Thus, theoretical insights and hypotheses about links between Islam, women's rights and democracy are not broadly or comprehensively tested with Arab Muslim populations. In this section, we attend to structural complexities within Islam, the impact of Islamic beliefs and practices, and women's rights. Both Kuwaiti voters writing to their local newspapers and outsiders, such as the U.S. State Department in its human rights report on Kuwait, see this lack of complete enfranchisement for women as a 'significant problem."[88] In this section, the impact of Islamic beliefs and practices is examined alongside social status and social network variables, which are important in predicting religious outcomes[89] and whose importance in predicting political attitudes is apparent in research on political participation.

State-sanctioned and -supported voluntary associations are among the primary venues of civil society in modern Kuwait.[90] Voluntary associations also are important because they provide alternatives to the family as bases for mobilizing citizens according to their interests and affinities. Voluntary associations are vital components of Kuwaiti political and social life. They are theoretically and, to varying extents in practice, more – or at least differently – democratic than *diwaniyyas*, meetings usually held in private homes,

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[85] Faour, Muhammad. (1993). *The Arab world after Desert Storm.* Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press.

[86] Ayubi, Nazih. (1992). 'State Islam and communal plurality', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political Science and Sociology*, Vol. 524, pp. 79-91.

[87] Farah, Tawfic E. (1979), 'Inculcating supportive attitudes in an emerging state: The case of Kuwait', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 11, pp. 56-6; Farah, Tawfic E., and Faisal S. A. Al-Salem. (1977), 'Political efficacy, political trust, and the action orientations of university students in Kuwait', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 8, pp. 317-28.

[88] *New York Times International*, Sept. 24, 1996, p. A3

[89] Bradley, Don E. (1995), 'Religious involvement and social resources: Evidence from the data set "Americans' Changing Lives," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 34, pp. 259-67; Cornwall. Marie. (1987). 'The social biases of religion: A study of factors influencing religious belief and commitment', *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 29, pp.44-56; Stark, Rodney, and William Sims Bainbridge. (1980). 'Networks of faith: Interpersonal bonds and recruitment to cults and sects', *American Journal of Sociology*,. Vol. 35, pp. 1376-95.

[90] Al-Mughni, Haya (1993) *Women in Kuwait: The Politics of Gender.* London: Saqi Books; Ghabra. Shafeeq (1991) 'Voluntary Associations in Kuwait: The Foundation of a New System?' *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 45, no. 2, pp. 199–215.

whose chief political advantage lies in the status of their venues as protected spaces relatively free from government intrusion.[91] Women are subject to discrimination legally, politically and socially. They are disadvantaged in matters of divorce and inheritance, which are based on Shari'a and must have the permission of a close male relative to obtain a passport. Muslim women may not marry non-Muslim men. Also, if married to a non-Kuwaiti, they cannot confer citizenship to their children. However, the family foundation of diwaniyyas, along with the limits imposed by their physical location, diminish their democratic character and bias their actions toward those supporting the social status quo. Yet as Haya al-Mughni shows, women's voluntary organizations, though nominally in the public sphere, also display pro-status-quo attributes, particularly with regard to their suppression of the development of political skills and access by non-elite women.[92] Women remain underrepresented in the public and private workplace, but their numbers are growing. Women's associations, which enjoy strong government support, are numerous and have considerable influence.

In accordance with the adopted UNDP methodology the annual rate of progress for the gender equality indicators in education could have been based on the "shortfall reduction" formula in view of the fact that "the most desirable value is 100 per cent", noting that two of them are supposed to be achieved by 2005 rather than by 2015. however, since the targets have already been achieved by 2004, the calculations involved are no longer applicable as table (I) shows. What remains is the indicator on the relative literacy rate for the age category 15-24 for which the "shortfall reduction" method will be applied.

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[91] Tétreault, Mary Ann (1993) 'Civil Society in Kuwait: Protected Spaces and Women's Rights', *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 47, No. 2, pp. 275–91.
[92] Al-Mughni, Haya (1993) *Op. Cit.*

TABLE II: EDUCATION AND LITERACY INDICATORS FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN KUWAIT[93]

DETAILS	RATIO OF GIRLS TO BOYS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION	RATIO OF GIRLS TO BOYS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION	RATIO OF GIRLS TO BOYS IN TERTIARY EDUCATION	RATIO OF LITERATE FEMALES
Value of Indicator in 1993	99.7	109.9	216.1	97.6
Value of Indicator in 2004	102.5	124.1	145.2	99.2
Required Annual Rate of Change	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	4.6
Observed Annual Rate of Change	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	6.1
Status of Achievement	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	Virtually Achieved

Detailed information on the ratio of girls to boys in the three conventional levels of education for the two years 1993 and 2004 confirms that Kuwait was able to achieve the goal of gender equality in education as required by the MDGs. As a result of these achievements, it is perhaps not surprising to find that the target ratio of literate females to males of 15-24 years old has been achieved by the year 2005 as required. The ratio in

[93] *Kuwait: Country Report on the Millennium Developmental Goals: Achievements and Challenges,* (2005). UNDP, Kuwait, State of Kuwait: Ministry of Planning (MOP), p.8.

question increased from 97.6% in 1993 to 99.2% in 2004, recording an annual rate of progress of 6.1 per cent far in excess of the required rate of 4.6 per cent per annum. Thus, judging gender equality by the relevant ratios in education and literacy. Kuwait was able to achieve the MDG on gender equality by the year 2004 as required. Women represent 70% of university graduates, and a few hold relatively senior non-political posts in the state bureaucracy. Shi'a are also severely underrepresented in the government. Despite their newly enfranchised status, women faired badly in the parliamentary elections. Out of 249 candidates, 28 where women, and they were all defeated, even though, even though more than 60% of voter turnout were women. In June, 2005 the prime minister appointed Masouma al-Mubarak Minister of Planning and Administrative Development. She is the first female cabinet minister in the nation's history.

Some of the already achieved MDGs include achievement of universal primary education, the target on elimination of gender disparity in all educational levels among other goals in Kuwait.[94] According to Moez Dorand, Resident Coordinator, UN, Kuwait has achieved impressive progress since independence in areas covered by the MDGs ranging from the eradication of absolute poverty to advances in health and education. Kuwaiti women's recent acquisition of political rights is the latest accomplishment to celebrate. The dual significance of the MDGs to the state of Kuwait emanates from the country's unique status as a developing, and a 'developer', country. The latter role is evident in Kuwait's remarkable record as a donor.[95]

The Bush administration has, in fact, already embraced a more honey-than-vinegar approach to democracy promotion through the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA). This initiative, announced in 2003, promises to reward poor countries with increased aid if they meet 16 different standards on issues ranging from good governance, the rule of law, and public education to health care and economic transparency. The MCA has the potential to become a powerful new tool for promoting democracy in the Middle East and

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[94] *Kuwait: Country Report on the Millennium Developmental Goals: Achievements and Challenges,* (2005). UNDP, Kuwait, State of Kuwait: Ministry of Planning (MOP), p.3.
[95] *Ibid.*, p.4.

beyond. But Washington has yet to emphasize the program or to apply it systematically to countries in the Arab world.[96]

"No matter how educated you are, it is experience that is the key to efficiency," he said. Tarek Sultan Al-Essa, Co-Chair of the Arab World Competitiveness Roundtable and Chairman and Managing Director, Agility, Kuwait, reckoned that the education system would be fundamentally undermined if hiring practices were not based on merit. In addition, formal education must be bolstered by the right R&D policies necessary to promote innovation and diversification of economies. Indeed, Sultan Al-Essa stressed that the competitiveness of Arab countries and their capacity to mitigate the many risks they face depend to a large extent on how the role of government and the public sector evolves. The surpluses of recent years, Sultan Al-Essa said, "are being used to create bigger and bigger government. That is not sustainable." Government, he added, must focus on creating the right environment for the private sector to take the lead and for companies and businesses to become more productive.[97] A major problem in Kuwait is that of the 80,000 Bidoon, or stateless people, who are considered illegal residents and denied full citizenship rights unless they can prove that their forebears were residents in Kuwait since 1965.

While discrimination based on religion reportedly occurred on a personal level, most observers agreed that it was not widespread. Sunni-Shi'a relations are good overall and while tensions from regional conflicts led to increased attention to the issue, few if any tangible problems resulted. However, there was institutionalized discrimination against Shi'a. Some Shi'a reported that they had been passed over for promotions and suspected their religious affiliation was the reason. Shi'as were underrepresented in certain branches of the military and security apparatuses.

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[96] Steven A. Cook. (2005). 'Way to Promote Arab Reform', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 2, March-April, p.99.

[97] Tarek Sultan Al-Essa, Co-Chair of the Arab World Competitiveness Roundtable and Chairman and Managing Director, Agility, Kuwait was speaking at the *Arab World Competitiveness Roundtable: Report*, Doha, 9-10 April 2007, p.11.

DEMOCRATIZATION AND PROSPECTS FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE

Although Kuwait has the oldest and most advanced democratic experience in the Gulf region, it is yet to establish modern democratic institutions. It remains captive to inherited traditional tribal practices and culture. Despite the absence political parties, it succeeded in organizing tribal groups into effective political forces. Nevertheless, the system largely follow basic democratic norms and values which are grounded in the equality of rights for all citizens regardless of gender or religion, the separation of powers within the state, and the establishment of competing political parties, which would allow change of government through free and fair contested elections. . The rising power of the Islamists in Kuwait, despite strenuous resistance by the relatively small liberal forces, believed to be an additional impediment to the establishment of a liberal democratic system in the foreseeable future. Although the influence of the Islamists in Kuwaiti society is considerable, this is largely counteracted by the seeming determination of the government to expand the margin of liberal practices, particularly with regard to women and minorities. All political forces have agreed on a list of major issues that require reform, including the electoral and judicial systems as well as the publications law. The major disagreement within the ranks of the competing political trends is between the liberal and the traditional movements concerning the implementation of Shari'a and personal freedoms.

Kuwait's democracy has experienced ups and downs, and more are probably in the offing as the country takes up such problems as extending suffrage to women and naturalized citizens (along with their descendants), as well as allowing political parties to organize. Intellectuals and opinion leaders in Kuwait commonly object not to democracy but to the way that it is practiced in their country. Khalifa al-Luqayan, a leading Kuwaiti poet and writer, recently expressed this sentiment: Democracy, as we understand it, is a way of citizen participation in the affairs of society. But unfortunately it brings us inexcusable behavior by awakening tribal and sectarian fanaticism. What we saw in the 1992 elections for the Assembly, municipal council, and cooperatives--voting for tribal and

sectarian reasons--will fragment our society rather than unite it.[98] Conditions in Kuwait have reached near maturity, yet it should always be remembered that such a process is by nature slow, and that maturation depends, internally, on the development of social and economic factors, and externally, on a more peaceful coexistence in the region, with progressive economic and political development. If Kuwait can take these steps forward, it may have an immense impact not just on Kuwait itself but also on developments in the entire region.

Liberal groups in the Middle East are at this point fragmented and weak. At the same time, pressures to regroup and speed up reform among the more urban and liberal-oriented sectors of society are gaining momentum. Public debate and long-term experience with the democratic process should eventually create the conditions for a more reasoned, forward-looking view among the population. This means a decrease in the number of fundamentalists, especially those who oppose any sort of political pluralism. Today, the U.S. and other governments are promoting democracy as they know it, without a prudent consideration of what the results might be. While it is advisable that Washington push for more democratization, liberalization policy in Kuwait, it must also acknowledge the danger of tampering with an established political and social fabric by imposing what Americans consider to be the ideal mechanism of democracy. As recent developments in the West Asia have shown (for example, in Lebanon and Yemen), a form of democracy that is incompatible with a society can cause real harm, even leading to civil war. In 2003, President Bush lamented, "Sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe," transforming democracy promotion into a national security priority. According to this logic, America must promote democracy as an antidote to terrorism; democracy promotion could no longer be relegated to obscure bureaus of the U.S. government. After 9/11 revealed the threats posed by extremism emanating from the Middle East, the Bush administration, and indeed many across the political spectrum, no longer considered democracy in the Arab world a luxury.

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[98] *Al-Qabas*, Feb. 20, 1994.

To be sure, the destabilizing events that have unfolded in Iraq and the broader region since 2003 have led to a backlash against democracy promotion in the Middle East, and to some extent, against the United States as well. Moreover, democracy promotion never secured a very high level of support or resources from the U.S. administration even at the height of its popularity. Kuwait continues to be regarded by Bahraini reformists as an exemplar of Gulf democracy. The 1973 Bahraini constitution was reportedly based on the Kuwaiti one, and the Kuwaiti restoration of parliament in 1992–1993 after the eviction of Iraqi troops inspired several Bahraini petition initiatives in the mid-1990s. A comparative study of reform priorities in Gulf States is found in the work of the prominent Bahraini scholar.[99] Crystal (2005) has also noted, "Pressure for political reform also comes from other Gulf States. The Gulf States have significant influence on each other. This is, after all, one cultural lake with many tribes and families stretching across borders and with many GCC nationals (more than the governments would like to acknowledge) discreetly possessing multiple GCC passports."[100] In addition to that will these must exist a broad, radical and ingenious contribution of education in terms of democratization and liberalization. But the present Arab educational system, from Kindergarten to university, is plagued by defects and inefficiency and rigidity, which will make it incapable of responding to that historical challenge. Many, many fundamental changes and reforms will be needed. Among them the following essential aspects and components must be addressed:

1. Equity and accessibility to a comprehensive broad education for every individual Arab is part of the fundamental human rights principle. To have approximately eighty million illiterates out of three hundred million Arabs is disgraceful and unacceptable. This huge block in the way of development can and should be removed within a short time. To speak of all other components of educational reforms without mobilizing a serious parallel formal and societal effort to address this shameful issue will be unjust and indeed repulsive.

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[99] Al-Ekri,'Abd al-Nabi. (2006). "Mutatallabat wa Tabi'at al-Islah al-Khaliji (Requirements and Developments of Gulf Reform)," unpublished paper. Manama: Bahrain, November 6.

[100] Crystal, Jill. (2005). "Political Reform and the Prospects for Democratic Transition in the Gulf," *Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE)*, Working Paper 11, July.

2. No matter what aims and goals of education we hope to achieve, the educational scene will not change unless the chronic problem of the preparation of the teacher is resolved. The preparation needs to be revolutionized in order to achieve professionalization of teaching. The period of learning and of practical preparation must be at least 7 years, one or two years of which must be allotted to internship under the guidance of a senior teacher to assess the suitability of the future teacher to teach in professional manner. Beside the specialized courses the future teacher must have a broad general (liberal) education in social sciences, humanities, philosophy, physical sciences, literature and arts. Future teachers must become committed intellectuals for change and not mere agents of transfer of information.

3. Only such teachers can be the agents of stirring positive and liberating attitudes in the minds and hearts of their students, of building in their students the abilities of analysis, rational criticism, regrouping and restructuring of facts. Such students will be flexible in thinking, adaptable to the constant changes of our globalized world, adventurous in their seeking of the new and the better, committed to justice in their societies and freedom in their cultures. Individually they have positive attitude towards work, time, discipline, order, law and achievement. Such students refuse to relieve and reproduce the same culture of the past and seek change and renewal, do not tolerate mythical thinking and can live with science.

4. It will be impossible for such teachers to work in oppressive school and it will be impossible for undemocratic school or university to rear such qualities in their students. Students learn by example and not by empty words.

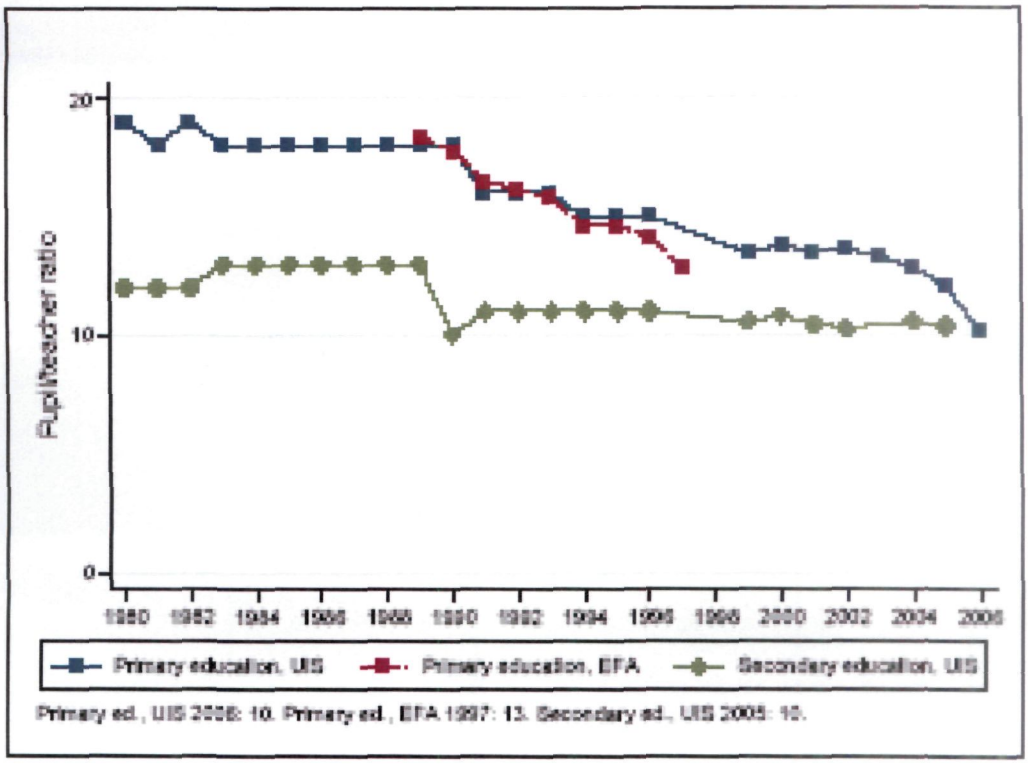
5. Schools and universities must aim at not only producing suitable workers for the globalized markets and a changing economy. They must also aim at producing committed responsible citizens, spiritual ethical human beings and intellectual revels and by doing that fulfill mankinds dreams over the centuries of human ascendance.

Recruits to teacher education are also affected by the general economy of the country and by teacher status. In Kuwait, where oil has been found, it is not easy to recruit indigenous teachers. In 1960, only 3 out of 97 secondary teachers in Kuwait were Kuwaitis.[101] In this

[101] D. K. Wheeler, (1966), 'Educational Problems of Arab Countries', *International Review of Education*, Vol. 12, No. 3, Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of UNESCO, p.309.

context is also important to analyse the Pupil/teacher ratio (See Graph VI which clearly shows the curve upward in 1980 to going down in 2006).

GRAPH VI: PUPIL/TEACHER RATIO IN KUWAIT[102]



Structured and phased core of liberal education must be taught form Kindergarten level to the postgraduate phases. Noting low literacy rates in the 400-page report, "The Road Not Traveled: Education Reform in the Middle East and Africa,"[103] the bank said the relationship between education and economic growth in the region has remained weak, the divide between education and employment has not been bridged and the quality of education continues to be disappointing. There is room for improvement with respect to primary education. The MDGs target requires that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. Three

[102] UNICEF, Division of Policy and Practice, *Statistics and Monitoring Section*, www.childinfo.org, May 2008

[103] The World Bank. (2007). *The Road Not Traveled: Education Reform in the Middle East and North Africa*, Washington: World Bank.

indicators for the achievement of achieving universal primary education goal been identified. These are the net enrolment ratio in primary education; the proportion of pupils starting grade I who reach grade 5; and the literacy rate of those aged 15-24 years. Table II presents the relevant information and results with respect to the achievement of the goal in question. Note that as per the adopted methodology the required rate of annual progress for the first two indicators is 4.8 per cent while that for the literacy rate is 4.6 per cent. The actual annual rate of progress is calculated as "shortfall reduction" in view of the fact that the desirable value for each one of these indicators is 100 per cent.[104]

TABLE III: INDICATORS FOR THE PRIMARY EDUCATION MDGs GOAL IN KUWAIT[105]

DETAILS	NET ENROLMENT RATIO IN PRIMARY EDUCATION	PROPORTION OF PUPILS STARTING GRADE I WHO REACH GRADE 5	LITERACY RATE OF 15-24 YEARS OF AGE
Value at the Base Year (1993, except where specified)	87.4 (base year, 1994)	94.8 (base year 1994)	98.4
Value at the Terminal Year (2004)	89.1	97.5	99.9
Required Annual Rate of Change (%)	4.8	4.8	4.6
Observed Annual Rate of Change (%)	1.4	4.7	9.4
Status of Achievement	Represents a challenge	Can be achieved	Achieved

[104] The required annual rates of increase use a horizon of 21 years for the first two indicators and 23 years for the third indicator.

[105] *Kuwait: Country Report on the Millennium Developmental Goals: Achievements and Challenges.* (2005). UNDP, Kuwait, State of Kuwait: Ministry of Planning (MOP), p.7.

As the Table II shows net enrolment ratio in primary education was 87.4% in 1994 and increased to 89.1% in 2004. The actual rate of progress towards achieving the target, in the sense of "shortfall reduction", is only 1.4 per cent per annum compared to the required rate of annual progress of 4.8 per cent. As a result, the achievement of this target represents a challenge to Kuwait as per the conclusion of the MOP-UNDP (2003).[106] The proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5 was 94.8% in 1994 and increased to 97.5% in 2004. The actual rate of progress towards achieving this target, in the sense of "shortfall reduction", is 4.7 per cent per annum compared to the required rate of annual progress of 4.8 per cent. As a result, the achievement of this target is feasible in the light of progress made since the early 1990s, albeit with additional marginal efforts to be exerted. The literacy rate of those aged 15-24 years was 98.4% in 1993 and increased in a systematic fashion to 99.9% in 2004. The actual rate of progress towards achieving this target, in the sense of "shortfall reduction", is 9.4 per cent per annum compared to the required rate of annual progress of 4.6 per cent. Looking at the record, the MDGs goal of achieving universal primary education has, for all intents and purposes, been achieved, nearly ten years ahead of time.[107]

Similarly, improvements in the quality of higher education would benefit the Kuwait's business sector, enabling it to improve the sophistication of business operations and to enhance the innovation capacity of domestic businesses. One particular aspect highlighted by the Survey is the prevalence of pervasive red tape that negatively affects business operations and makes the entry of new companies difficult. At the same time, businesses find government regulations difficult to comply with, and the country occupies a low 73rd position on the indicator that assesses this category. However, the country boasts very good financial infrastructure with easy access to a wide range of financial services, including loans, equity markets, and risk capital. More than other economies that fall into this group, Kuwait remains sheltered from the international economy and thus foregoes the benefits of competition. Although formal trade barriers

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[106] *Kuwait: Country Report on the Millennium Developmental Goals: Achievements and Challenges.* (2003). UNDP, Kuwait, State of Kuwait: Ministry of Planning (MOP-UNDP), pp.15-16.

[107] *Kuwait: Country Report on the Millennium Developmental Goals: Achievements and Challenges.* (2005). UNDP, Kuwait, State of Kuwait: Ministry of Planning (MOP-UNDP), pp.7-8.

are not identified as obstacles, foreign ownership is considered the most restricted of the countries covered (rank 128 out of 128 countries). Both the low level of imports and restrictions on entry by foreign firms further reduce competition in the already very small internal market. At tertiary education the issue of general or liberal education is one of major importance. Not facing this issue will produce specialists with tremendous capacity to misdirect and mislead and superficialize the process of development that we outlined.

The liberal education will teach, and convince students, some fundamental habits of mind and mature approaches to life. An education that will show them that knowledge can at times be blind and illusive, that one has to beware of fragmented knowledge and dispersed unarranged information, that the human condition is complex and comprises biological, social, cultural, historical and psychological components, that man is not only an individual but also part of society and part of mankind, that all disciplines of knowledge and all aspects of life are full of uncertainties that need to be faced and affronted, that ethic and moral values must guide all disciplines, that behind technology hides a rigorous science and that we live in a World where the local has become part of the international and the universal part of the national. In Kuwait, the ability of nationals to secure access to educational credentials, and especially higher education degrees, is an important resource for their entry into state positions.[108] Symbolic and superficial changes have been introduced in most Arab countries. State-sponsored councils and committees have been sprouting at a rapid rate in many countries, including in the Gulf region where identification with Shari'ah was all that the regimes were willing to submit to. Regular elections in Kuwait, Jordan and Lebanon have resulted in a changed political structure. It can be maintained that the influence of Islamic fundamentalism has been weakened in countries where relatively free elections have taken place. Only in Kuwait have the fundamentalists been able to bolster their support; any explanation of this phenomenon has to take into consideration the peculiar electoral laws in the country, where women are still denied voting rights. Women have not formed the backbone of Islamic fundamentalist organizations in any Arab country and they constitute the bulk of

[108] Ghabra, S.H. (1997). 'Kuwait and the dynamics of socio-economic change', *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 51, pp. 358–372.

secular forces in Algeria, Jordan and Lebanon. In 1981, Kuwait passed a law to eradicate illiteracy and allow illiterate adults to enroll in literacy programs.[109]

Kuwait had relatively better-performing education systems until the 1990 Gulf War. Since then, it has slowly tried to recapture its position and currently has a primary NER of 86 percent. Success in meeting education objectives does not always correlate with per capita income. Surely, countries with relatively high per capita income such as Kuwait perform relatively better than poor countries like Djibouti or Yemen. However, it is also true that countries like Algeria and Saudi Arabia, with relatively high per capita incomes, perform less well than countries with lower per capita income like Jordan or Tunisia. Thus, financial resources may be necessary for improving education, but the availability of resources is by no means a sufficient condition.

There is an imminent need for the process of liberalization that gives a special consideration and a top priority to the building of knowledge capacity in Arab societies: capacity of production, dissemination, regulation of its excesses and abuses by ethical values and by a genuine concern for the environment and for human dignity. The effort to achieve the above will include generous use of science, research and technology and the contribution of art, literature and religion.

Striking a balance between contemporary interests and traditional values is an issue that is moving to the fore in the education sector, as increased privatisation and a growing population reshape schools in Kuwait. While Kuwaitis expect an education that will prepare them to go to universities abroad, there is a growing fear that Westernisation is eroding Kuwaiti identity in the classroom. Presiding over this debate is Nouria Al Sbeih, Kuwait's first female minister of education, tasked with re-energising the country's educational system in the face of increased regional competition and shifting societal demands. The Ministry of Education (MoE) is well aware of the need for reform in both private and public schools, and its efforts were acknowledged by the World Bank in 2008, when it ranked Jordan and Kuwait as the top education reformers in the Arab

[109] MENA DEVELOPMENT REPORT (2008) *The Road Not Traveled Education Reform in the Middle East and North Africa,* The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank: Washington DC, p.161.

world. Moving into 2009, the MoE will have to build on its gains to give the Kuwaiti public the caliber of education as well as options that it desires.

To meet these challenges particularly the job creation imperative, the region must first assess its competitiveness – the productivity of its economies benchmarked against the rest of the world – to determine how well prepared each is to sustain recent growth momentum. In Doha, the World Economic Forum released The Arab World Competitiveness Report 2007.[110] The results identified the most competitive economies in the region in three groups as they performed against international peers. Ranking among those at the most advanced stage of development are the United Arab Emirates (#29), Qatar (32), Kuwait (36) and Bahrain (39).[111]

In context of liberalization, to spur a private sector surge, the role of government should be limited, said Tarek Sultan Al-Essa, Chairman and Managing Director, Agility, Kuwait. "We need to set targets for downsizing the government impact on the business sector." He observed: "The role of government and public sectors seems to be shifting from provider/investor to regulator/facilitator. This is key across all sectors and will unleash growth across the region."[112]

Education is the primary prerequisite for the process of democratization based on liberalized policies of the state. Accordingly, the more education expands and progresses in all areas the more thought reaches higher standards, recovers its normal condition, and plays its role in such a way as to have a considerable impact on civilizational edification, economic development and social progress. The state of education in the Arab world in general does not depart from this rule. The main distinguishing features of this state can be summarized as follows:

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[110] *The Arab World Competitiveness Roundtable* was under the direct responsibility of Peter Torreele, the Managing Director of the World Economic Forum. The World Economic Forum is an independent international organization committed to improving the state of the world by engaging leaders in partnerships to shape global, regional and industry agendas. Incorporated as a foundation in 1971, and based in Geneva, Switzerland, the World Economic Forum is impartial and not-for-profit; it is tied to no political, partisan or national interests. (www.weforum.org)

[111] *Arab World Competitiveness Roundtable: Report*, Doha, 9-10 April 2007, p.8.

[112] *Ibid.*, p.11.

a) The adoption of different educational policies and the multiplicity of systems and methods in the Arab countries, which almost totally isolates Arab countries from each other. Such a state of affairs weakens cultural and intellectual ties among these countries and reduces the opportunities of exchanging expertise and capabilities with a view to expanding and improving education within the frame of shared intellectual and civilizational backgrounds.

b) The failure of a number of educational curricula to keep up with contemporary developments and techniques, as well as to keep abreast of and closely monitor current international mutations in the educational field. The result is the worsening of the divide between education in the Arab world and its counterpart in the contemporary world.

c) The large number of less qualified instructors. It should be noted that it is those who earn their high school diplomas with low grades who are oriented towards faculties of education and teacher training colleges. They are also the product of the prevailing education system based on memorization rather than an education directed towards critical thinking and creativity. They, therefore, apply the same system upon their graduation, once serving within various educational institutions.

d) The absence of an adequate school environment in a number of Arab countries, whether in terms of buildings, classroom and laboratory equipment, or opportunities of free opinion expression, besides highly centralized administration. All these factors have a negative effect on the education process and restrict freedom of initiative, action and thinking in addressing the problems facing educational administrations and the teaching profession whether in schools, institutes and faculties.

e) Rampant illiteracy in a number of Arab countries and the inability of these countries to fight it in an effective and comprehensive manner in spite of the efforts made and money spent in this regard.

The social structure of Kuwaiti society has been rapidly became comparable to most Western States today: the education and health services, social security provisions, utilities and public employment which were introduced in Kuwait compare with the most

modern systems in the world. Each State provided its citizens with these services as guaranteed rights; for instance, the State is pledged constitutionally to provide every individual with a job appropriate to his qualifications. The guaranteed job concept is an Islamic social concept. Education and processes of democratization are intertwined and interrelated. It is safe, therefore, to conclude from the foregoing that Kuwait as well as the other Arab Gulf States is witnessing a rapid return to the traditional Islamic Shari'a, as a result of many important factors internally and externally. Kuwait is to be considered the leader among the Gulf States in returning to Islamic law of which education is a cardinal principle through the adoption of some Islamic Laws and their implementation and application since the beginning of the 1980s. It was the aim of this chapter to oversee and investigate the steps followed by Kuwait -as a model in adopting education as a process of democratization and liberalization under the rubrics of established Islamic ethos.

CHAPTER III

REGIONAL INFLUENCES ON EXPERIMENTS IN POLITICAL LIBERALISATION

The chapter considers trends toward genuine democratization. In that context, much discussion focuses on types and levels of political liberalization. Political liberalization and political democratization are two processes that must be distinguished from each other. Whereas democratization, with a focus on popular political participation and elite accountability, requires political liberalization (the promotion of individual freedoms and rights), the latter can happen without the former. Although political liberalization can be witnessed throughout much of the Arab world, movement toward genuine democratization, enshrined and consolidated in both constitutional arrangements and political practices, is rare.[1] Yet, as one regional analyst argues, "[i]t is no longer possible to delay the establishment of the pluralistic, democratic state in our Arab world because we need the benefits that such a state provides – good governance, marked by transparency, accountability and participation at the grass-roots level in the march of the nations."[2] The following chapter explore the extent of genuine progress toward democratization and the degree to which it has in fact been eluding the region despite the urgency with which true change must be pursued if the countries of the region are to overcome the "tremendous challenges . . . in achieving the levels of human development that only good governance, including its political aspects, can ensure."[3] Democratisation in the Arab World and Africa proceeds unnoticed.[4] It could be that traditional images and stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims are so deeply engraved in the minds of people in the West that the notion of democracy among Arabs and Muslims is still- for Many- unthinkable. The origins of political parties in the West Asia go back to the seventh

[1] See UNDP, (2002) *Arab Human Development Report 2002*, particularly chapter 7 on 'Liberating Human Capabilities: Governance, Human Development and the Arab World,' pp. 105–20.
[2] Leila Sharaf, as quoted in UNDP (2002), *Arab Human Development Report 2002*, p. 115.
[3] UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2002*, p. 106.
[4] The best book on the subject is John Esposito & John Voll. (1996). *Islam and Democracy*, New York: Oxford University Press.

century, when schisms within Islam began to emerge.[5] Even though those parties lacked some attributes of modern political parties in Western Europe and the USA, they clearly contained some important elements that characterise modern political parties. If one uses the characteristics of political parties used by LaPalombara and Weiner,[6] it becomes clear that some of the political movements of early Islam were not the religious movements that they were- and still are- considered to be. Early sects within Islam, including that of Shiite Islam, started as a movement seeking not only a change of policy by the ruling group, but the seizure of power itself. And although the movement was centred on the leadership of ¨Ali, it continued long after his death. The later theological characteristics of Shiite Islam were intended to distinguish the movement sharply from its rival, Sunni, version of Islam. Similarly, the Kharijites enjoyed all the characteristics of political parties, if a party is understood to mean ` an association that activates and mobilizes the people, represents interests, provides for compromise among competing points of view, and becomes the proving ground for political leadership'.[7]

The roles of political parties and movements in the Arab world did not diminish because of an inhibiting cultural environment, but because of repressive political conditions. The Ottoman empire, for example, stifled political activities and endorsed only one version of truth, and one authorised political line, not different from the certainty of truth contained in Plato' s theory of the Forms. The millet system, which recognised juridicially the cultural, social and religious autonomy of the various sects living within the empire in matters of personal status laws, encouraged-and in fact insisted on- the assumption of representative responsibilities by the clerical establishments within the various sects. This later blurred the lines between nationhood and sectarian consciousness, which explains why the word *milli* in Persian and Turkish means `national'. The notion of *ummah*, as an all-encompassing community of believers, could be seen as one that is incompatible with the requirements for pluralistic political institutions. But despite Quranic references to the

[5] See As¨ad AbuKhalil. (1993). `The study of political parties in the Arab world: the case of Lebanon', *Journal of Asian and African Affairs*, Vol. 1, pp 49-61.
[6] See Joseph LaPalombara & Myron Weiner. (1966), eds, *Political Parties and Political Development*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
[7] Roy Macridis. (1967). ed, *Political Parties: Contemporary Trends and Ideas*, New York: Harper Torchbooks, p 9.

ummah, and despite the desires and wishes of ordinary Muslims, the Muslims were never united, not even during the reign of Muhammad. Civil war, known in Arabic as *al-fitnah al-kubrah* (the Great Sedition), broke out among Muslims in the wake of Muhammad's death. Islamic history bears witness to the inability- and unwillingness- of Muslims to agree on matters relating to faith and government.

Orientalists, and Muslim wishful thinkers, have been presenting an image of Muslims united against everybody else,[8] while Muslims have been at war against one another perhaps more than they have been against non-Muslims. Tracing original roots of party politics in Islamic/Arab history remains outside the scope of this chapter. It was this century that introduced Western-style political parties into the region. The colonial- and semi-colonial- period witnessed the rise of political parties as new voices of political expression. They were intended, by some colonial authorities, not as a supplement to traditional leaderships of families, tribes and clerics, but perhaps as a possibly useful alternative.[9] Far from that, modern party politics did not replace old, traditional forms of leadership and organisations. In the language of James Bill and Robert Springborg,[10] the informal groups in Arab society penetrated and dominated the formal groups, including modern political parties. Many forms of informal groups, like the family, tribe, sect and the clique, have shaped, and in many cases helped produce, political parties. To emphasise the increasing role of political parties in the Arab world is not to expect inevitable democratisation in those countries where political parties have been active, and is not to expect the political parties themselves to lead the process of democratisation, although they remain its main beneficiaries.But political parties have to face their own record, which does not leave many people comfortable with their ability to lead the process of democratisation. Professional associations, like syndicates of lawyers, physicians, journalists, artists, university professors, and teachers may enjoy a credibility that political parties do not have anymore. Professional associations could be entrusted

[8] This has been eloquently represented in the writings of the influential Orientalist Bernard Lewis.

[9] This does not mean, of course, that colonial powers fought traditional forms of organisation and loyalty. In many cases, colonial governments used the tribal and sectarian systems to their own advantage, especially when faced with the sophisticated political threat of effective political parties, like the communists in Iraq during the monarchist period.

[10] James Bill & Robert Springborg. (1994). *Politics in the Arab world*, New York: HarperCollins, pp. 91-98.

with the task of political transformation and democratisation because they appear less corrupt and rigidly organised than political parties. In all countries where democratization- as a process- has begun, professional associations are asserting themselves.

The high energy prices of the past few years have brought the Arab world the highest growth rates in nearly three decades. In the oil-exporting countries, the oil boom has gone hand in hand with surging fiscal and external surpluses, shrinking public debts and raising levels of foreign reserves. This windfall has been shared by the non–oil-exporting countries through investment flows, remittances, and trade. These developments appear to have dramatically transformed the economic prospects of the region, bringing a renewed sense of optimism and overshadowing the heightened geopolitical insecurity of the past few years. As long as energy prices remain at their present high levels, it is safe to suggest that the Arab economies —especially those endowed with substantial oil and gas reserves—could sustain the ongoing prosperity for a while. But therein lays the danger as well. What if oil prices take an unexpected downward dive, as they have done over the past three decades? More worrisome, what if the current prosperity postpones the adoption of structural reforms needed to achieve international competitiveness and sustain the current growth momentum? After all, oil booms have traditionally provided breathing space for governments and delayed the implementation of reform programs. Such concerns about the long-term prospects of the region and the likely trajectory of reform are shared by international observers and, more importantly, policymakers and the general public in the Arab world. Yet only a few regular assessments of economic developments in the Arab world are produced, notwithstanding the increased relevance of the region's energy resources, financial liquidity, and geopolitics to the stability of the world economy. In addition, the region suffers from serious gaps in the availability of basic economic and financial indicators, not to mention a lack of transparency in policymaking and limited accountability in reviewing outcomes.

STATE, CIVIL SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS

Recent years have witnessed a proliferation of studies on the role of political, economic, social and cultural dynamics in bringing about processes of democratic transition. While many of these studies differ on the degree of importance that they attribute to the various forces responsible for the democratization process, most agree that, at some point in the transition, either before the actual demise of the non-democratic state or afterwards, civil society develops and plays a crucial role in influencing the political system.[11] For most democratic theorists, who tend to see democratisation processes and outcomes as contingent on the confluence of international and domestic actors and developments (democratic contagion, state breakdown, class actors, pacted negotiations, etc), a democratic civil society develops after the actual process of transition from an authoritarian to a democratic state has taken place.[12] There have been others, however, arguing mostly from a sociological and cultural perspective, who maintain that civil society frequently develops before, and is in fact a main cause of, the transition to a democratic system.[13] In either case, both camps agree that civil society is one of- if not the- crucial phenomena that takes shape and becomes influential during processes of democratic transition. Civil society organizations- defined here as self-organising and self-regulating groups with corporate identities that are autonomous from the state- may exist within any given social or political setting. But for them to become politically relevant, and more importantly, to become agents of democratisation, they must have three additional, specific characteristics: (1) they themselves must operate democratically,[14] encompassing and respecting pluralism and diversity, thus in turn bestowing the virtues of democracy on their own members; (2) they must complement their own issue-driven agendas with implicit or explicit demands for political democracy, therefore adding to the pressures the state feels in opening up; and (3) they need either to

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[11] See, for example, E. Gellner (1994). *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Service and its Critics*, New York: Penguin; J. Hall (1995). ed, *Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison*, Cambridge: Polity Press; I. Budge & D. McKay (1994). eds, *Developing Democracy*, London: Sage; and K Tester. (1992). *Civil Society*, London: Routledge, to mention only a few.

[12] G O' Donnell & P Schmitter. (1986). *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, p 48; B Geremek. (1992). 'Civil society then and now', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp 3-12; L. Diamond. (1994). 'Rethinking civil society: toward democratic consolidation', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp 4-17.

[13] See, for example, C Bryant, 'Civic nation, civil society, civil religion', in Hall, *Civil Society*, pp 136-157.

[14] H. Eckstein. (1961). *The Theory of Stable Democracy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

gather sufficient powers on their own or, better yet, be complemented by other CSOs, in a process of horizontal relations of civil society within itself. Civil society, in other words, cannot by itself spark the overthrow of an authoritarian system and replace it with a democratic one. Neither can interest groups, which often have narrowly defined and specific agendas, simply take the place of political parties and replicate their functions.

Civil society must view political society as legitimate and be willing to work with and through it. As this section of the chapter will demonstrate later, one may find a plethora of CSOs in the Arab world (as well as in Africa), ranging from tribal confederacies to freemasons and syndicates belonging to traditional merchants (bazaaris). However, not meeting the three additional preconditions outlined above, none of these groups has so far served as a viable medium for societal democratisation or for increasing demands on the state to become more representative and/or accountable. The democratic contingency of civil society organisations relates to a second proposition, this one dealing with their initial appearance and subsequent rise in numbers. For CSOs to appear and become agents of political liberalisation, four sets of conditions must be in place. In broad terms, they include the weakening of the state resulting from its failure to deliver its promises or to fulfill many of its functions; the cultural alienation of the state from society; political effects of economic adjustment and liberalisation; and the existence of social actors able and willing to mobilise various constituents for specific goals that may be local or even national in scope. There are some functions that every state performs- the provision and building of infrastructure, for example- and there are functions that it promises to perform- stimulating economic growth and enhancing its citizens' standards of living. Civil society organisations tend to develop in response to an actual or perceived breakdown in the functions of the state in some specific area, be it in the protection of the environment, helping the indigent, sponsoring literacy classes or religious seminars, helping expectant mothers, providing health care to needy communities, and so on. Thus they emerge and organise themselves to satisfy those needs and functions which the state has been unable or unwilling to deliver. CSOs also develop when existing state-affiliated or even largely independent organisations appear tainted in the popular eye (political parties, women's rights groups, etc) because of their apparent or actual connections with the state.

The situation in the Arab world is completely different, with most Arab world states having effectively tied their own corporate identity with that of most or some of the more powerful social groups and organisations (e.g. the religious establishment), therefore curtailing much of society' s independence and autonomy. If autonomy has to do with the amount of power that state and society have in comparison to one another, then the state's ownership of, or control over, the various economic resources found in society is of utmost importance. Under these circumstances, civil society is given no alternative but to look inward in order to find cooperative solutions to the decline in the living standard of its constituents.[15]

In crisis situations, it is also a signal to other economic actors that they can, if they so choose, defect from the old political alliance on which the non-democratic state relies. In other words, `the inability to avoid or adjust successfully to economic crisis increases the probability that authoritarian regimes will be transformed and reduces the capacity of authoritarian leaders to control the process of political change, including the terms on which they exist'.[16] The potential ramifications for CSOs could be far-reaching, particularly in light of the increasingly freer environment within which they operate and the mounting pressures on the state. The breakdown of paternalistic, ISI strategies prompts the state to scale back its role, thereby reducing its ties to society (eg subsidies, etc). Civil society is no longer tied materially to the state, thus allowing it to organize itself in an autonomous fashion. Finally, CSOs are made up of social actors, some of whom are located strategically in society in terms of their cultural prestige, their access to communication networks and means of mass mobilisation, and the degree to which they can safeguard their autonomy from the state. Some of the more notable social actors that belong in this category include clergymen, intellectuals, community activists, union organisers, and the like. Having the opportunities and the facilities to organise into independent action from the state is one thing; doing so democratically and for larger democratic goals is quite another. Just because CSOs exist does not mean that their

[15] P. Oxhorn. (1995). *Organizing Civil Society: The Popular Sectors and the Struggle for Democracy*, University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, p 44.
[16] S. Haggard & R. Kaufman. (1995). *The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 7-8.

individual or collective efforts will automatically amount to democratic pressures on the state. To facilitate a democratic transition, CSOs must inculcate the norms of tolerance, trust, moderation and accommodation. Contingency comes into play again, with some actors being democratically inclined at some points and in some contexts while others less so. The role of the clergy within Arab world is most illustrative.

In Arab world, many clergymen jealously guard their independence from the state and, especially in recent years, have seriously challenged the powers and legitimacy of the political elite, few are interested in giving popular currency to the ideals of democracy and in bringing about truly representative political systems.[17] Reinforced by a long heritage of familiarity with the concept and practice of democracy in the region, the coming political transition was likely to result in a representative democracy. The situation in the Arab world has been quite different, however. Although some conditions favourable to the development and spread of democratically inclined civil society organisations have been present in a few Arab world countries, many more have been conspicuously absent. The rentier, corporatist states of the Arab world have been able to continue drawing rent revenues, albeit at much smaller rates compared with a decade or so ago, and to make good on the implicit and explicit promises that underlie their popular legitimacy. Most Arab world states have also been able to manipulate enough cultural norms and premises-be they Islam or charisma, nationalist sentiments or patrimonialism-still to retain evocative and emotional ties with broad strata of society. Moreover, while there has been some economic liberalisation in the Arab world, it has been neither enough nor in a direction that would result in a meaningful rolling back of the extensive reaches of the state.

This chapter makes a contribution toward closing this gap by assessing the competitiveness of Arab economies. Utilizing the results of the most recent World Economic Forum's Executive Opinion Survey, the chapter benchmarks the competitive

[17] This point deserves much fuller treatment than the scope of this thesis allows. For two differing views on this see. J. Miller. (1996). *God Has Ninety-Nine Names: Reporting From a Militant Arab world*, New York: Simon and Schuster; and J. Esposito & J Voll. (1996). *Islam and Democracy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press,

performance of Arab countries against selected comparators. Having briefly analyzed some of the critical problems in Chapter I that impede democratic transition in the Arab World, this chapter documents some quantitative data on the status of democracy in Kuwait. This requires objective criteria for measuring the progress or regression of democracy over time. The chapter presents the annual Freedom House survey of the Arab countries for the year 2006 (See Table). But to give greater insight over time. An alternative composite Status of Democracy Index (SDI) has also been presented with the Table, designed by Saliba Sarsar.[18] For the source of composition, the data related to some variables for Saudi Arabia and UAE have also been incorporated. Ms. Sarsar's study is particularly interesting and illuminating not only because it compares the status of democracy over time, in 1999 and 2005, but also because the SDI comprises nine variables including the Freedom House Index. The first "four variables address governance and representative government. These mark how heads of state and members of the legislature are selected, as well as political party development, suffrage, and the maturity of political rights and civil liberties. The fifth variable measures media freedom as provided by the Freedom House annual survey. The sixth variable is religious freedom, derived from U.S. Department of State reports. The seventh variable measures the observance of human rights, derived from data provided by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the U.S. Department of State. The eighth and ninth variables measure human development and economic freedom respectively, the first provided by the UN Development Index, and the second by the Heritage Foundation's index of economic freedom, respectively. The SDI assigns each of these nine variables 2 points for a total of 18 points. Each score ranges from 0 to 2, with 0 being nonexistent and 2 being the highest measurement. For example, if the head of state or legislature is not elected, then that country receives a score of zero. Prohibition of political parties would also equate to a 0 while tight controls would merit a 1, and reasonable free functioning would score to a 2. Media freedom religious liberty, and respect for human rights are each easy to quantify: 0 for not free, 1 for partly free, and 2 for free. Human development is scored by level: 0 for low, 1 for medium, and 2 for high. Economic freedom, the last variable, is scored on the level of governmental interference in the economy, with 0 for strong, 1 for moderate, and 2 for low interference. It is then possible to convert the totals to a percentage for easy digestion.

[18] 'Quantifying Arab Democracy, Democracy in the Arab world' in *Arab world Quarterly*, Summer 2006.

Legend for Table:

A: 0 = no; 1 = indirect or partially free; 2 = yes

B: 0 = no; 1 = indirect or limited; 2 = yes

C: 0 = prohibited or nonexistent; 1 = controlled by government approval; 2 = reasonably free

D: 0 = none; 1 = some; 2 = yes

E:0 = not free; 1 = pretty free; 2 = free

F: 0 = none; 1 = some; 2 = yes

G: 0 = not observed; 1 = partly observed; 2 = fully observed

H: 0 = low human development; 1 = medium development; 2 = high human development

I: 0 = strong governmental interference; 1 = medium government interference; 2 = low government interference

TABLE I: STATUS OF DEMOCRACY INDEX'S (SDI), 1999, 2005.

S. No.	FACTORS	SAUDI ARABIA		KUWAIT		U.A.E	
		1999	2005	1999	2005	1999	2005
1.	**Free Election of Head of State**	0	0	0	0	1	0
2.	**Free Election Legislature /National Council**	0	0.5	2	1	0	0.5
3.	**Political Parties**	0	0	0	0	0	0
4.	**Suffrage**	0	0.5	1	1	0	0
5.	**Media Freedom**	0	0	1	1	0	0
6.	**Religious Freedom**	0	0	1	1	1	1
7.	**Human Rights**	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5
8.	**Human Development**	1	1	2	2	2	2
9.	**Economic Freedom**	1.5	2	1.5	2	2	2
10.	**Total SDI**	2.5	4	9	8.5	6	6
11.	**% SDI**	14	22	50	47	33	33
12.	**Arab SDI Ranking**	16	N.A.	5	N.A.	10	N.A.
13.	**Political Rights**	7	7	4	4	6	6
14.	**Civil Liberties**	7	7	5	5	6	6

Another striking result for these for countries is that they have relatively low rankings on indicators related to health and education when benchmarked against the group of advanced economies. Despite their relative wealth all four countries rank toward the bottom of the group on this pillar, particularly on indicators measuring access to primary education. On the positive side, most of these countries have made significant progress over the past three decades with respect to increasing educational enrollments, demonstrating the capacity to make further advances in the future. Aside from quantitative targets, the quality of outcomes in tertiary schooling needs to be enhanced to reverse the low valuation of educational credentials by the private sector.

Over the last half a century, Arab societies have witnessed a tremendous transformation of almost all aspects of socio-economic and political life. In the closing years of the millennium, the countries in the Arab world look very different from what they were in the aftermath of the Second World War. One of the most salient, and least analyzed, developments is the change in their educational system in bringing about democratization and liberalization. In the late 1990s, the great majority of young citizens in Kuwait had the opportunity to receive formal education. This dramatic shift in the educational system is different in many ways from the experience in other developing countries. After achieving political independence, most Third World states sought to develop their own human resources in order to be really independent from their former colonial masters. These countries, however, have suffered from a capital shortage. Simply stated, there are not enough financial resources to meet their ambitious plans. On the contrary, the Kuwaiti monarchy has enjoyed substantial surpluses of capital. Since the early 1950s, the regimes have accumulated huge wealth from oil revenues. After the boom in oil prices in the mid 1970s, Kuwait had to deal with an unusual dilemma, what to do with the extremely vast revenues from oil export. It seems that they decided to invest in three interrelated major fields: the creation of socio-economic infrastructure and public bureaucracy, the development of the agricultural and industrial sectors, and the improvement of social services including health care and education system. Thus, the creation and expansion of the public system of education can be strongly attributed to the rise in oil revenues. This strong connection between oil and education suggests that the

expansion of the latter was not in response to a well-articulated development plan. Rather, unlike many other countries, the expansion of the educational system in Kuwait was not part of a slow and gradual process of social and economic development. Instead, it was part of the newly-created welfare state where most of the social services, including schools, were offered for the indigenous population either completely free or for a minimum charge. The goal was to share oil revenues among the local population and to bring in democratization and liberalization. Moreover, these impressive social and economic achievements were not accompanied by similar changes in domestic culture and values. The mentality and attitudes of the citizens seem to have changed very little. As one scholar puts it, "modernization and economic growth raced far ahead of social and political development".[19] This imbalance between economic growth and social development has produced a unique educational system in the region. The number of individuals with formal schooling is rising, but the quality of the education they receive does not correspond to the need of Kuwaiti and other Gulf societies. In other words, the educational policies pursued in the last several decades have contributed to a number of societal distortions. These include a mismatch between traditional and modern schooling, an imbalance between indigenous and foreign laborers, and a gender gap between men and women. In most developing countries which have embraced structural adjustment reforms, it is the social sector which has most severely been reduced, forcing women to make up for the shortfall.[20]

In terms of gender justice and education, current statistics underscore the significant improvement and the remarkable expansion of educational opportunities at all levels for Arab women in the last two decades. A new born girl in the Arab world today has much better chance than her mother to attend school and finish college. Arab governments are committed and determined to augment educational opportunities and to make them accessible to all eligible women. It is firmly believed that without emancipating women from the bondage of illiteracy no real political, social or economic development can take place. Several studies in the Arab world show that the education of women is the most

[19] Bill, J. A. (1984). Resurgent Islam in the Persian Gulf. *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 63, p.116.
[20] Baker E (ed) (1994). *The Strategic Silence: Gender and Economic Policy*, Zed Books London.

powerful weapon for improving their status as well as the most potent force of social change, and will touch every aspect of their life from the family to economics. For example, it was discovered that women's education is the best weapon against the population explosion. It was also shown that the educational attainment of the women determines the attitudes of others toward women and their role in their society. Men whose mothers had no formal education are inclined to oppose the notion of granting women equal political rights and equal employment opportunities. Quite the opposite is true of men whose mothers attended a university. Furthermore, women's participation in public life is proportionately related to the degree of education. As educational opportunities increase for women in the Arab world, so do their chances for integration in the labor force and moving up the employment ladder.[21]

It may be argued that fundamental changes need to be introduced in the Gulf educational system in order to overcome these imbalances and to bring in democratization. For centuries the most common form of education in the Gulf monarchies was the *kuttab*, where a group of boys or girls were taught to recite the Qur'an and sometimes learned basic writing and arithmetical skills.[22] This kind of education usually took place either in mosques or houses. There were no organized classrooms. Additionally, the sons of the ruling elites received religious education fro the *ulama* (Muslim scholars). This traditional form of learning started to change at the end of the 19th century. A group of missionaries, usually referred to as the Arabian Mission, was founded in 1889 by an independent American Protestant group.[23] The Mission opened its first school in 1892 in Bahrain[24] but achieved a limited success in promoting modern education due to its close association with Christianity. Instead, the foundations of a modern school system were laid down in the early 1950s in most of the Gulf monarchies. Two important factors contributed to this development. First, the acute shortage of skilled indigenous manpower to meet the requirements of modernization. Second, the enormous rise in state revenues

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[21] Ayad al-Qazzat. *Education of Women in the Arab World*, http://www.library.cornell.edu/colldev/mideast/awomeduc.htm

[22] Husen, Torsten (ed.). (1994). *The International Encyclopedia of Education*. New York: Pergamon, p. 4201.

[23] Al-Misnad, S. (1985). *The Development of Modern Education in the Gulf*. London: Ithaca Press, p.31.

[24] *Ibid.*, p.31.

from the sale of oil meant that the financial resources to carry out an ambitious plan to promote public education were available. The result had been a tremendous expansion of educational facilities all over the region. It is important to point out that this impressive achievement was made, to a large extent, with the assistance of expatriate teachers from neighboring Arab countries, particularly Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. This apparent acute shortage of national teachers prompted the Gulf States to establish domestic teacher-training colleges which were later expanded into comprehensive universities. On November 28, 2008, MPs Abdullah Al-Roumi, Khaled Al-Sultan Bin Essa, Hassan Johar, Musallam Al-Barrak, and Marzouq Al-Hubaini Al-Azmi proposed a law to extend the mandatory retirement age for Kuwaiti teaching staff at Kuwait University from 65 to 70 years. The MPs argued that Item 32 of Law no. 15/1979 has denied the country services of able and intelligent professors by restricting the retirement age of Kuwaitis to 65 years.[25] The public education at all levels is provided free of charge and, in some places, students are provided with a monthly allowance, uniforms, books, transportation, and other necessities. This close association between Gulf governments and the ruling families on the one hand and institutions of learning at all levels on the other has strengthened the governments' hand in controlling universities. Put differently, since the former provide all the funding for the latter, there is very little room for academic and political freedom. Universities were created by the governments to perform a specific job: to prepare citizens for employment in the expanding bureaucracy. In addition to creating comprehensive universities, the Gulf States established Islamic schools and universities. There are many reasons for the generous funding for these institutions. These include an attempt by the ruling families to appease the leaders of the religious establishment at home and, at the same time, to underscore their Islamic credentials abroad. These Islamic universities - with their traditional character and curriculum, easy admission requirements, and high stipends - attract a growing number of students particularly those who come from a low social class. Ironically, these schools and colleges have become the breeding grounds of populist Islamic ideas and ideals. In addition to these exclusive religious institutions, public education in the Gulf monarchies

[25] "IslamOnline Network | Islamic News, Articles, Fatwas and Business". Islamonline.com. http://www.islamonline.com/news/newsfull.php?newid=190555. Retrieved on 2009-05-17.

is dominated by two characteristics. First, the curriculum of schools and colleges continue to be dominated by Islamic and Arabic studies.[26] Given the shortage of vocational and technical training among the local population, the need for foreign manpower is likely to endure for the fore- seeable future. Still, all the Gulf states have sought to "nationalize" their labor force. Thus, the "Kuwaitization," "Omanization," and "Saudization" of domestic employment have become important goals for the Gulf governments. The reason for this change is the necessity to generate jobs for the better educated but increasingly unemployed local population. Consequently, a number of Gulf states have initiated policies to replace foreign workers with nationals by establishing limits on hiring expatriate workers, setting minimum quotas for hiring nationals, and raising the cost of employment of non- nationals.[27]

The Arab region has witnessed a remarkable increase in the distance higher education domain over the past two decades. This significant progress, however, does not necessarily denote quality programs. A key problem is regarding how to ensure that a quality learning experience is being provided. Thus, the need for developing quality assurance frameworks for distance higher education institutions and programs in the Arab region is evident. With the development of quality assurance frameworks, some points should be considered: Historically and culturally, the Arab region has many features in common, in particular from the linguistic and religious standpoints; however, it is in many respects a highly inconsistent in terms of population, size and national income, resources, stability, prosperity and so forth. So the exact framework, which will be adopted by each country, will depend on the conditions prevailing and no single framework can be presented that is applicable to all universities in all Arab countries. Therefore, we need a number of skeletal or basic frameworks to start with, and will be ultimately set up within the context of each institution's own vision and mission, as well as, objectives and core values relative to distance education.

Of course, there is complex interplay among the separate elements that go together to make a quality distance education program; therefore, it is important that quality

[26] Abir, M. (1988). *Saudi Arabia in the Oil Era.* Boulder: Westview Press, p.35.
[27] Sassanpour, Cyrus. (1996). *Policy Challenges in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries.* Washington DC: The International Monetary Fund, p. 27.

assurance of all aspects of distance education programs be considered. Otherwise, the failure in assuring quality of one aspect may have a knock-on effect on the quality of the whole system. Given all issues highlighted in Chapter I, it seems honest to conclude that developing such a framework is essential for ensuring quality, but is not enough on its own to ensure quality distance education offerings. It should be regarded only as the beginning of an ongoing comprehensive process that has to be supported effectively to produce the desired results. For successfully executing such a framework, all essential synchronous conditions which foster quality assurance have to be present, such as integration of the quality assurance into the institution' commitments, staff persuasion and engagement, commitment by each of the organizational units involved to ensure the quality in all of the services provided, and the development of a positive corporate culture.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS

The context of democratization studies on the Arab world has been set by the global trend towards democracy.[28] The most important factor causing this trend was, of course, the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The disintegration brought about change at two different levels. First, new political systems had to be constructed in the former Soviet territories and in many of the states which had been heavily dependent on Soviet support. Second, pro-Western regimes were more vulnerable than before to demands for political liberalization. They could no longer use the 'Communist threat' as a justification for restricting political freedoms, for there was no such threat. The Western powers themselves, moreover, were no longer inhibited from exerting pressure for political reform by a fear that such pressures would drive these countries into the hands of an opposing camp. Major international actors in the region, such as the United States, must not dodge their responsibility for regional peace-making; American support for Israel's policies in the region and American and Soviet intervention in regional politics during the Cold War have in large part created or compounded many of today's problems. The Soviet Union has disappeared, but the United States survived the Cold War and has to

[28] For an overview of the democratization trend worldwide see D. Potter, D. Goldblatt, M. Kiloh, and P. Lewis. (1997). eds., *Democratization*, Polity Press, Cambridge. For a more detailed and extensive study see G. O'Donnell, P. Schmitter and L. Whitehead. (1986). eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule* (4 volumes), Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore.

confront its Cold War legacy in this, and other, regions of the world. Although the chapter makes some references to the application of its arguments in the Arab world, it remains largely at the theoretical level, leaving the practical application of the discussion to Kuwait that pick up on many of the main themes of education as a factor in liberalization and democratization.

A further important factor inducing political change stemmed from economic factors. The increasing emphasis which international financial institutions were giving to economic liberalization, from the mid-1980s onwards, posed new political challenges to the regimes in those countries where reform packages were imposed.[29] The cuts in state expenditure inevitably lowered standards of living (at least in the short term). One strategy for meeting the resultant unpopularity was to institute a measure of political liberalization, thereby both diverting public attention and spreading the blame/responsibility for economic policy. Political liberalization was also used as a means to signal to international investors that the character of the regime was changing towards one which had more Western-style characteristics and which was therefore more safe for investment. The Arab world stands out as the region of the world where democracy is least in evidence. Very few of the political systems of the region can be regarded as liberal democratic, and for most of the populations of the area there is little indication that democratization is a short-term prospect. This phenomenon has been particularly apparent since 1992. Whereas from 1988 to 1991 democratization seemed to be making progress in the Arab world (with Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan, Morocco, Algeria, and Yemen all experimenting with liberal parliamentary systems), since 1992 there has been regress. The last parliamentary elections in each of the above-named countries have been less free, less open and less genuinely representative than the elections before. The most important achievement of democratization studies of the Arab world has been to conduct an enlightening debate on the reasons why the Arab world has been so little touched by the global trend. Much of the debate has revolved around the concept of

[29] An extensive treatment of this aspect is found in T. Niblock and E. Murphy. (1993). eds., *Economic and Political Liberalization in the Arab world*, British Academic Press, London.

'exceptionalism'.[30] The latter concept refers not to the reality of a low level of democratisation in the region (in these terms, the Arab world is indeed 'exceptional' internationally), but to whether there are substantive long-term reasons why democracy has not proved, and will not prove, workable in the region. In other words, is it just a matter of time before the Arab world follows other parts of the world into democratization, or is it likely to remain for the conceivable future outside of this process? The achievement, then, has not been one of reaching an agreed position on the causes for lack of democracy, but of clarifying the arguments which can be put forward to explain it-and perhaps identifying some of the key weaknesses in each argument. In what follows, I will present the main explanatory lines of analysis, commenting briefly on the strengths and weaknesses inherent in each. The first line of analysis, which rests strongly on a perception of the Arab world's long-term exceptionalism, is the explanation in terms of culture-especially the Islamic component of Arab world culture. It is contended here that the belief-system of Islam, embodying divinely-ordained prescriptions which cover a wide range of different aspects of social, political and economic life, negates the concept of popular sovereignty and renders it impossible to entertain a political system which functions according to majority votes.[31] While this approach is still maintained in some quarters, it has been subject to strong and persuasive counter-arguments: the Islamic framework has a fluidity about it, leaving room for a wide variety of different interpretations, many of which have no problem in accommodating liberal parliamentary institutions; some Islamic countries have succeeded in establishing democratic systems (e.g. Malaysia and Turkey); and some elements in Islam are specifically favourable to democratic values (e.g. the emphasis placed on extending full participation in the sacred community to all, and on universalism, the 'rational systematisation of social life' and spiritual egalitarianism).[32] The second line of analysis focuses on the structural relationship between state and society in the Arab world. The contention made is that social groupings (whether class formations or civil associations)

[30] An issue of the Arab Studies Journal was devoted to 'Arab world Exceptionalism', see *Arab Studies Journal.* (1998). Spring, vol. 6, no. 1.
[31] See P. Vatikiotis. (1987). *Islam and the State,* Routledge, London.
[32] See Simon Bromley, 'Arab world Exceptionalism: Myth or Reality', in Potter et al., p. 333. Bromley is in this passage referring to some of the arguments put forward by E. Gellner. (1981). in *Muslim Society.* Cambridge University Press.

are in a weak and dependent position in relation to the state, and are not capable of impelling the state towards an agenda which reflects their political interest in achieving a stake in policy-making.[33] The bourgeoisie, often regarded as imbued with a crucial role in leading the move towards democratization, has developed within a framework where its interests are closely interlinked with the interests of key elements in the state, and where it is dependent on these elements for contracts and licences. More broadly, it is dependent on the state for the suppression of radical threats to its position. The intelligentsia and the wider middle classes are similarly dependent on the state-many of the members of these strata being state employees. The industrial and service workers are kept in position through a combination of social welfare and oppression. The Arab world state has, it is contended, achieved this dominance over society due to a variety of different economic and politico-historical processes. Rentier income has accounted for a substantial part of government revenues (and not only in oil-producing states), such that the state has not been greatly dependent on revenues raised through tax from the population. The 'revolutions' which removed regimes based on the old landed classes and the urban notables were carried through by the military, which then used a carefully-constructed web of security, economic and political measures to ensure that no social or economic grouping could challenge the power of the new regime. National and international problems (such as those given rise by the legacy of imperialism and by political zionism) have often enabled the Arab world state to lay claim to a 'sacred mission' on behalf of the population, thereby justifying the construction of a large military/security infrastructure and the suppression of opposition as treason. The structural line of explanation has two significant advantages. First, although it is sometimes advanced as an argument for Arab world 'exceptionalism', it uses variables which can be of significance anywhere (although no doubt to differing degrees). It provides, therefore, a basis of comparability with democratization experience elsewhere, suggesting that the Arab world's political development may in the long-term not be greatly at variance with that in other parts of the developing world. Second, it enables differences between Arab world states to be

[33] Among the writers who put forward a structural explanation are Bromley, 'Arab world Exceptionalism ..., and John Waterbury. For the latter, see J. Waterbury, 'Democracy without Democrats?: the Potential for Political Liberalisation in the Arab world', in Salame, G. (1994). ed., *Democracy without Democrats: the Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World*, I.B. Tauris, London, pp. 23-47.

brought out: the factors do not impinge in the same way on every Arab world state, either in extent or in manner. The structural explanation, therefore, enables researchers to explain why some Arab world states have developed parliamentary systems with at least a veneer of democracy, while other have not. A difficulty about the structural approach, however, lies in reconciling it with the experience in East Europe-for there the state was even more dominant over society than it was in the Arab world, yet democratization occurred. The third line of analysis will be referred to here as the practical problems approach (in general the range of problems have mostly been described individually, rather than being welded together into an overall approach).[34] The contention here is that Arab world governments are held back from democratizing by the very real problems which democratization would pose to the coherence and perhaps survival of the state. The main problems referred to are: the likelihood that elections would be won by an Islamist movement antithetic to the liberal democratic framework; that the process of economic liberalization, on which most of the states of the region are embarked, requires a strong government capable of adhering to unpopular decisions in the face of mass protest; that, given the strategic importance of the region, external powers would use a liberal democratic framework to buy influence and distort the political process; and that freedom of political organisation would encourage inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflict, as parties would base themselves on ethnic and religious loyalties. The practical problems approach benefits from the same two advantages as the structural approach: the variables used enable comparisons to be made between Arab world states and other states, and among Arab world states. A valid criticism, however, is that the approach may display a *naively* trusting attitude towards Arab world governments-it assumes that they would be happy to press forward with democratization if only the practical situation rendered it more straightforward. The practical problems may, perhaps, be more accurately characterized as excuses used by Arab world governments to mask their underlying refusal to compromise their hold on power. One line of analysis which has not been covered above is that of modernization theory, where emphasis is placed on the socio-

[34] A number of the practical problems covered here are dealt with in I.H. Deegan (1993). *The Arab world and Problems of Democracy*, Open University Press, Buckingham.

economic prerequisites for liberal democracy.[35] The main prerequisites which are identified are those of education, industrialization, social mobility, urbanization and standard of living. Although modernization theory may contain some useful insights, there is no reason to believe that it explains the slow pace of democratization in the Arab world relative to other developing countries. A number of Arab world countries score relatively highly on the above indices, yet they have been surpassed on the road to democratization by countries with lower scores. Identifying Inadequacies in Democratization Studies of the Arab world The academic debate on democratization in the Arab world has clearly made some good use of wider theoretical literature on democratization processes. There are, however, three respects in which perceptions in the wider literature have been given insufficient attention. First, the Arab world related literature purveys a romanticized conception of the nature and characteristics of liberal democracy. This occurs not through any explicit description of liberal democracy, but precisely through the absence of any analysis of the concept and its practical application. The concept hovers, like a mystical symbol, in the background of the discussion on democratization in the Arab world, with an implied assumption that liberal democracy constitutes an ideal polity where the common good is realized by means of the population deciding issues through the election of individuals who carry out the people's will. Yet the wider theoretical literature on democracy and democratization has, over a prolonged period, pointed to the unreality of this perception of democracy. As early as the 1940s, Schumpeter in Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy showed that liberal democracies are in fact managed by elites.[36] Democracy should, he said, be re-defined in terms of 'an arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote'. Schumpeter referred to the classical doctrine of democracy as having survived despite its lack of realism, acquiring the status of religious belief. Democracy, he said, had changed from a mere method that can be discussed rationally 'like a steam engine or a disinfectant', to an ideal and a mystical symbol. Much of the more recent theoretical literature has emphasized that

[35] See D. Lerner. (1958). *The Passing of Traditional Society*, Free Press, New York.

[36] J. Schumpeter. (1970). *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, George Allen and Unwin, London, (first published in 1942). The use made of Schumpeter here is heavily dependent on the excellent exposition of Schumpeter's work found in P. Cammack. (1997). *Capitalism and Democracy in the Third World*. Leicester University Press, ch. 1.

there are social and economic costs to democratization: it is likely to be elite-led, and there is 'no room in the new democracies for either "social democracy" (the extension of the democratic principle to the workplace, and to other institutions) or "welfare" or "economic" democracy".[37] The practical effect of the failure to provide a realistic conception of liberal democracy is that the political systems of the Arab world are being compared with an ideal which does not exist in reality-hardly a fair comparison. It is not surprising, therefore, that these political systems emerge in a poor light. It might be useful if the advantages of democracy could indeed be discussed rationally 'like a steam engine or a disinfectant', rather than occurring under the shadow of a mystical ideal. The ideal-laden conceptualization of democracy has, moreover, had a negative impact on empirical research on Arab world political systems. Having written off the political systems of the area as being congenitally undemocratic, researchers have clearly felt that it would be a waste of time to examine or analyse the participative or representative aspects of the systems. There has consequently been very little empirical research on either the elections or the parliamentary/consultative bodies of the Arab world. Yet there are elements of accountability, representation and political conflict which are present in these processes and institutions. Even when an election is rigged, it may be worth considering what social groupings have been prepared to collaborate, and why voters may still deem it worthwhile voting. Similarly, the study of government- dominated parliamentary or advisory bodies can provide insights into the struggle for influence between different factions in the regime, the latitude within which free discussion is permissible, and the rationale or lack of rationale in the government policies which are debated. The second weakness is that the literature concentrates mainly on the under-lying factors impeding democratization, giving relatively little attention to how democratization may come about. Much of the recent theoretical literature on democratization has moved away from the former focus, mainly because democratization has occurred in so many countries which were previously deemed ill-suited to it (e.g. Eastern Europe). The concentration has shifted towards examining the processes whereby internal divisions within a regime, or a crisis confronting a regime, can open up a process

[37] P. Cammack, Capitalism and Democracy ..., pp. 220-1. Cammack is referring in particular to G. O'Donnell, and P. Schmitter. (1986). *Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

of democratization.[38] A faction within an authoritarian regime may initiate such a process not because its members adhere to the intrinsic values of democracy, but because it needs popular support to out-manoeuvre a rival faction. Or else, a ruling party/clique may opt to democratize so as to lessen the danger of being eradicated when an opposition movement comes to power. The chance of competing for power can be seen as preferable to remaining in power but living with the risk of long-term elimination. Shifting the focus of democratization studies of the Arab world towards a concern with how democratization might be initiated could prove productive. It is, at least, a possibility that the intense jockeying for power and influence which is currently taking place within the Saudi royal family (mainly over the succession) could lead to one faction or other seeking to buttress its position through popular support, and championing the opening up of the political system. Indeed, in certain respects this has already happened.[39] The same possibility arises over the succession struggles which are occurring within the ruling families of the United Arab Emirates (especially Abu Dhabi) and Kuwait. Similarly, the very intensity of the conflict between oppositional Islamists and governmental secularists in Algeria could push both sides to accept a democratic framework. Each could realistically calculate that having a chance to compete for power may be preferable to running the risk of losing everything. John Waterbury has given some attention to this 'pacted' approach to democratization, but the idea has not been widely applied in democratization studies of the region.[40]

A third dimension where the wider literature has had insufficient impact on the Arab world case relates to the role of international political factors. The particular mix of economic and strategic interests which Western powers have in the Arab world, it could be contended, ensure that the regimes there will be supported against internal as well as external threats. All proclamations of commitment to democratization are overridden by these interests.

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[38] See, for example O'Donnell and Schmitter, Tentative Conclusions ..., The latter draws conclusions from vols. 1-3 of the work edited by O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead, Transitions ..., Also of key importance here is D. Rustow. (1970). 'Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model', *Comparative Politics*, No. 3, pp. 337-63.

[39] See the interview given by Prince Talal bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud in Al-Quds al-Arabi, 17 April 1998. Prince Talal was advocating free elections and a general opening up of the political system. He is believed to be a supporter of the faction of the Al Saud which is closely identified with Crown Prince Abdallah.

[40] Waterbury, '*Democracy without Democrats ...*', pp. 34-42.

DEMOCRATIZATION IN THE ARAB WORLD

A new project has been established entitled "Challenges to Genuine Democratization in the Arab World." Under the direction of Daniel Brumberg, Special Adviser to USIP, this project explores the risks, costs, and benefits of Arab states moving beyond state control to genuine democratization. The project examines key Arab states that have begun to experiment with political liberalization through political systems, media independence, and intellectual debate, and examines the move from full autocracy to some limited experimentation with releasing state control over all aspects of society. Interestingly, these states make up the majority of the Arab world and include Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, and Yemen--all of which are at differing stages of political liberalization. The events in Morocco, Kuwait, Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon suggest that the edifice of authoritarianism in the Arab world is under unprecedented siege. Incensed by the economic, social and political failings of the region's autocracies, and emboldened by calls from within and outside the Arab world for fundamental political change, a myriad of opposition parties and civil society organizations have issued calls for democracy and reform. Clearly, the barrier of fear that has long pervaded the region has been severely rattled. While these events are encouraging, their implication for the survival or transformation of the Arab world's autocracies is far from clear. Most of these regimes are not despotisms in the classic sense. Instead, the vast majority are semi-authoritarian composites—liberalized autocracies — that combine a measure of openness in the press, civil society and electoral/parliamentary arenas, with varying degrees of state-managed control and selective repression.

ROAD MAP FORWARD FOR DEMOCRATIZATION

While such regimes are under enormous domestic and global pressures, the path from liberalized autocracy to competitive democracy has not been systematically studied by scholars, or chartered by the relevant players in the Arab world. What we do know is this: liberalized autocracy remains a complex and resilient hybrid, a multi-dimensional system that presents its own particular legacy and distinctive challenges. Thus what is urgently required is a road map that suggests how—if at all—regimes and oppositions can move beyond the boundaries of state-managed liberalization to competitive democracy. This

relates at least partly to what Nietzsche calls `slave morality',[41] which remains powerful in the political cultures of different communities. Suffering and toleration of misery are championed to rationalise the rule of the elite and to justify one's inferior status in society and polity. Belief in one's ability to bring about necessary change weakens as anticipation of the miraculous grows. As people believe that individuals as a collective are weak and helpless, belief in the ` one man' grows.

Part of the challenge in imagining this road map derives from the unwritten consensus that has sustained liberalized autocracies, or at least kept them from falling apart. These regimes have survived in part because political elites in both regimes and oppositions have viewed liberalized autocracy as a second best alternative to full democracy. This tacit consensus has been most evident in countries beset by conflicts over national identity. In Yemen, Morocco, Jordan, Kuwait, and Algeria, political elites have long feared that full democratization would exacerbate these conflicts by making it possible for the victors of elections to impose their religious, cultural or ethnic agenda on the losers. Thus many elites came to prefer or at least tolerate liberalized autocracy precisely because parliaments and electoral systems that lacked real authority or power nevertheless promoted a measure of peaceful coexistence among competing groups. Although the consensus that has sustained such accommodations has certainly frayed, liberalized autocracy has bequeathed a troubled legacy, three dimensions of which will complicate the effort to move beyond state managed liberalization.

1) Ambivalence About Full Democratization - Because Islamists can attract a mass constituency through mosques and other religious institutions, they have benefited most from the opportunities for political mobilization afforded by liberalized autocracies. As a result it is not merely regimes that exhibit ambivalence about the risks entailed in moving beyond state-managed liberalization. Such caution can also be found within non-Islamist opposition groups, such as liberals, women's organizations, and ethnic groups such as Kurds and Berbers. Because these groups fear that democratization might empower their Islamist rivals, they have often preferred the imperfections of liberalized autocracy to the

[41] Friedrich Nietzsche. (1994). *On the Genealogy of Morality*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

black hole of full democratization. Some Islamists have tried to reduce the fears of these groups by not mounting a decisive challenge to the status quo.[42] Thus during Morocco's 2002 parliamentary elections, the Islamist Justice and Development Party (JDP) chose not to run a full slate of candidates nation-wide, thus coming in third in an election that the JDP might very well have won. But such short-term tactics only accentuate the perceived costs to national stability that full democratization often provokes, without offering any long-term institutional solution other than the persistence of an increasingly fragile status quo. The identity cleavages that have sustained liberalized autocracy have been exacerbated by socio-economic tensions arising out of efforts to shift from state-managed economies to fee market systems. Because democratic competition could strengthen the hand of groups opposed to privatization and free trade, advocates of market reform have often viewed state-managed political liberalization as a safer alternative to full-scale democratization.

2) A Radical Reform Menu - While allowing for a measure of pluralism in civil society and the press, as well as state-managed competition in parliaments and elections, the institutions, constitutions and laws that have sustained liberalized autocracies remain deeply dysfunctional. "Elected" parliaments often lack the authority to legislate on behalf of their purported constituencies. Indeed, ultimate power remains in the hands of presidents and monarchs who rule through the formal institutions of the executive, or through informal networks and cliques that give decisive power to regime cronies in the military, intelligence community and/ or ruling family. This sad situation has been perpetuated by constitutions and laws that are filled with provisions that emasculate legislatures, and by judiciaries that are largely extensions of the executive.

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[42] See Hadar, Leon T. (1994). 'What green peril?' *Foreign Affairs*, No. 73, pp.27-42; Miller, Judith. (1994). 'The challenges of radical Islam'. *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, pp. 43-56.; Huntington, Samuel P. (1993a). *Democracy's Third Wave. In The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, edited by Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, 3-25. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press; Huntington, Samuel P. (1993b). 'The clash of civilizations?', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, pp. 22-49; Kolakowski, Lesek. (1993). 'Uncertainties of a democratic Age'. In *The global resurgence of democracy*, edited by Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, 321-24. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press; Addi, Lahouari. (1992). 'Islamicist utopia and democracy'. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political Science and Sociology*, Vol. 524, pp. 120-30; Butterworth, Charles E. (1992). 'Political Islam: The origins.' *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science: Political Islam*. Vol. 524, pp. 26-37.

Thus any transition from liberalized autocracy will require a total overhaul of the existing political system. Absent comprehensive political reforms that give real substance, authority and power to formal political institutions and processes, Arab leaders will continue to undertake the kinds of baby steps that they have long preferred--partial measures that effectively strengthen liberalized autocracy and thus obstruct a transition to competitive democracy. It is far from clear what the precise nature and content of such reforms should in each country. Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, and Yemen are all liberalized autocracies in that they tolerate or foster some measure of opposition activity. But these regimes have allowed different degrees (and mixes) of opposition independence and regime hegemony. As a result, the probabilities for making a transition differs from case to case, as does the required mix of constitutional, institutional or legal reforms. Given the paucity of both conceptual and case-specific work on how to move beyond liberalized autocracy, the task of defining the menu or reform remains a vital if difficult challenge.[43]

3) High Stakes Pact Making - Few political actors—especially within the non-Islamist opposition—are well positioned to advance (or take advantage of) dramatic change. As result, whether political change occurs via regime collapse, or as is more likely, via a gradual transformation of existing political systems, the net result will be the same: intense conflict over the economic, political and cultural content of any substantive democratization program. Given this lack of consensus regarding the purposes of democracy, any stable, non-violent and durable transition will probably require a negotiated accommodation or pact within the opposition and then between opposition parties and regimes. How such a pact will be brought about remains a mystery. It could also be argued that democratisation of the Arab world is a potentially dangerous project from the standpoint of US foreign policy. The interests of the USA would be harmed by a situation of political reform in a country like Saudi Arabia, where the royal family has been instrumental in providing the West with the necessary predictability in oil production and pricing. Radical political and economic change in the Arab would alter

[43] Asher, Herbert B. (1988). *Presidential election policies: Voters, candidates, and campaigns since 1952.* Chicago: The Dorsey Press.

not only relations between regimes and peoples in the region but also between ruling groups and the world at large. This has meant that the USA can only afford to call for democratisation in countries that are harshly critical of its foreign policy and economic interests. Blanket support for democracy and human rights could undermine the powers of pro-US regimes. The current political landscape in the Arab world differs in a number of fundamental ways. To begin with, while most Arab world states are authoritarian, none can really be classified as bureaucratic-authoritarian. The non-democratic states of the Arab world have yet to fall victim to the successes of their own social and economic development policies. As the preceding pages demonstrate, most have managed to retain a degree of functional viability vis-à-vis society that has enabled them to maintain power. In essence, despite significant weaknesses, the authoritarian, corporatist states of the Arab world have not reached a complete political deadlock. Nor have Arab world states embarked on economic liberalisation programmes that have transferred greater autonomy and power to social actors. Moreover, most Arab world leaders have been able to complement the institutional basis of their rule with at least one or more sociocultural dynamic, thus reducing (but by no means eliminating) the need for society-based alternative venues for organisation and participation. A growing variety of autonomous or at least semi-autonomous groups and organisations has, nevertheless, appeared in a number of Arab world societies, ranging from religious endowment organisations to private social clubs.

Some observers of the region have even gone so far as to maintain that Arab world leaders are `facing persistent crises of government', with old political remedies no longer yielding traditional results.[44] Thus `the new language of politics in the Arab world talks about participation, cultural authenticity, freedom, and even democracy'.[45] The number of political parties in some of the region' s countries is in itself an impressive indicator of a `blossoming civil society'. More impressive, however, are the plethora of professional associations, businessmen's groups, and cultural clubs found especially in Kuwait

[44] A. R. Norton. (1995). `Introduction', in Norton (ed), *Civil Society in the Arab world*, Leiden: E J Brill, p. 3.
[45] *Ibid*, p 5.

among[46] other Arab countries. Of particular note are Kuwait's *diwaniyyah*, `a gathering place in leading citizens' homes where men (and in recent years a few women) gather to socialize and share views on a range of topics from sports to politics'. There are also political parties, syndicates and, more importantly, professional organisations that engage in `politics by proxy'- Kuwait's University Graduates Society, etc.[47] To begin with, given the persistence of authoritarian rule in the Arab world, it is doubtful how truly autonomous and detached from the state these organizations can become. In fact, it is doubtful whether `civil society' is an apt description for these organisations at all. In Kuwait, civil society is at best still `a work in progress', being pursued by `quasi-autonomous associations' which operate in a system that has `controlled participatory institutions'.[48]

The controversy over the very existence or viability of civil society organizations in the Arab world notwithstanding, it is important to remember one of the defining characteristics of the phenomenon of civil society. As noted earlier, not every politically autonomous societal group is a democratic or democratically-inclined CSO. Some CSOs operate on the assumption that the democratisation of the larger polity is in their interest, and therefore pressure the state, whether directly or indirectly, to open up and democratise. There are other similar groups, however, whose interests are highly specific and do not extend beyond protecting certain rights and privileges vis-à-vis the state. On the whole, they are not concerned with a general relaxation of state authoritarianism. The most powerful examples of this phenomenon are found not only among many of the groups mentioned above, but, in specific relation to the Arab world (and Africa), among tribal groups and the bazaaris.[49] Both these groups tend to be highly interested in curtailing the specific activities of the state in so far as the extent of their own autonomy is concerned. Their chief concern has been securing a more profitable share of the

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[46] *Ibid*, p 16.
[47] S. E. Ibrahim, `Civil society and prospects for democratization in the Arab World' in Norton, *Civil Society in the Arab world*, p 42.
[48] N. Hicks & G. al-Najjar, `The utility of tradition: civil society in Kuwait', in Norton, *Civil Society in the Arab world*, pp 212-213.
[49] R. Tapper. (1990). `Anthropologists, historians, and tribes people on tribe and state formation in the Arab world', in A R Norton (ed), *Tribes and State Formation in the Arab world*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, p 67.

corporatist arrangement in relation to the state and those other groups whom they perceive to be unfairly advantaged. As a result, neither group has so far served as an agent for the democratisation of the larger polity, either on its own or in conjunction with other societal actors. There are, in sum, three broad clusters of forces that have impeded the emergence and growth of a dense, democratic civil society in the Arab world. To begin with, although Arab world states have suffered substantial and deep economic and political reverses since the global recession of the early 1980s, they have managed to retain enough powers to i) hold onto the reins of power and not be overwhelmed by societal pressures; ii) manipulate enough social and cultural values to retain just enough popular legitimacy. This touches on a second set of factors responsible for the stunting of CSOs in the Arab world so far, namely the absence of a need for alternative, non-official or non-state related venues for popular organisation, expression and participation. Arab world states have not severed all their cultural ties with society. In the Arab world, either through charisma or patrimonialism, connection with Islam or clientelistic populism, the state continues to present itself, with varying degrees of success, as an extension and indeed a guardian of some of society' s most important norms. This seeming reluctance actively to foster non-state and non-official alternatives is reinforced by the region's pattern of economic development, the third reason for the widespread absence of democratic CSOs. Rentier economics has enabled the state to maintain a mutually beneficial corporatist arrangement with selected social groups, therefore lessening the possibility of demands for radical political change and, by extension, for democratisation. The groups outside the `contract' demanding changes are repressed.[50]

Total autocracy is the exception rather than the rule in the Arab world. Most Arabs live under autocracies that allow a measure of openness. Three factors have generated and sustained such regimes. First, the rulers of Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, and Lebanon have not tried to impose a single vision of political community. Instead, they have put a certain symbolic distance between the state and society in ways that leave room for competitive or dissonant politics. By not nailing the state's legitimacy to the mast of one ideological vessel with a putatively sacred national or religious mission, they have helped

[50] L. Cantori, `Civil society, liberalism and the corporatist alternative in the Arab world', *Op. Cit.*, p. 38.

to short-circuit the growth of counter-hegemonic Islamist movements. Second, partial autocracies are non-hegemonic. Within limits, they allow contending groups and ideas to put down institutional roots outside the state. This ensures competition not only between Islamists and non-Islamists, but among Islamist parties as well. The more such contention there is, the likelier it is that rulers will risk an opening. Third, partial autocracies have enough economic development and competition to free the state from obsessive concern with any single interest, class, or resource. In many such regimes, for instance, one finds public-sector employees and bureaucrats vying with independent professionals and private businessmen for the state's political and economic support. Consensus politics and state-enforced power sharing can form an alternative to either full democracy or full autocracy, particularly when rival social, ethnic, or religious groups fear that either type of rule will lead to their political exclusion. In Kuwait, Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco, and to some extent Egypt, the peaceful accommodation of such forces depends in part on the arbitrating role of the ruler.[51] Given the present constellation of social and political forces in today's Arab world, democratisation does not appear as a likely possibility in the foreseeable future. What perhaps makes this third phase in the development of civil society unique is that for the first time associational life has organised and mobilised itself independently from the state, pressuring and demanding greater representation and accountability from public officials. An American political scientist, Samuel Huntington's `third wave' of democratisation may be irreversible if this third phase in the development of civil society continues to value and promote democratisation.

Democratization in the Arab world usually takes a top–down approach, is applied arbitrarily, and is hostage to internal and regional conflicts. The region is in need of more than purely symbolic democracy. However, a certain period of top–down rule in the democratization process is required to balance and stabilize the effects of economic, political, and cultural reforms. These reforms establish the foundations for a solid civic culture and instill faith in democracy and government among ordinary citizens. This will help overcome the frustrations that exist over persisting authoritarian rule of the state.

[51] Daniel Brumberg. (2002). 'The Trap of Liberalized Autocracy: Democratization in the Arab World?', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 4, October, p.61.

Syria's democratization process has been characterized by several coups d'etat, multiple constitutions, and the Ba'th party's tight and autocratic grip on power, but also by some limited economic liberalization. Lebanon is characterized by strong sectarianism and both coexistence and segregation of different religious groups. Lebanon enjoyed some autonomy under Ottoman rule, and its Christian population developed strong ties with Rome. The French "adoption" of Lebanon heralded an era of Westernization. In the wake of the 1926 liberal constitution, high political posts and parliamentary seats were divided among the four main religious groups. The remaining 14 groups, however, have been excluded from holding high office. Although the Lebanese enjoy some freedoms, democracy is still at a very rudimentary stage. Nevertheless, commitment to a free press, a functioning parliament, and growing civil society have helped build a relatively strong sense of identity among the Lebanese. Jordanians enjoy similarly basic political freedoms. Jordan's Hashemite lineage has offered secular and religious legitimacy to the state, which supports an institutionalized, moderate political system. The country benefits from an almost homogeneous population, with political representation offered to minority groups. Even during periods of transition and heavy-handed rule from the top, only little violence has occurred. Under martial law, opposition parties continued to operate, suffering only limited repression. Many of their leaders were later brought into high-ranking government posts. Jordan's kings have managed to lend legitimacy to a patriarchal monarchy with democratic characteristics. A relativist approach to defining and designing democratization processes in the region is necessary to allow for deviations from idealized (Western) concepts of democracy.

"Why have Arab world political regimes not followed the 'Third Wave' of Democratization?" is the intriguing question that has preoccupied scholars' minds throughout the 1990s - and still no convincing answer has been found. We argue here that this should not come as a surprise, since the question itself is highly problematic: triggering innumerable contributions and based on normatively biased and teleological premises, it led authors to examine what did not exist, instead of what was actually going on in the Arab world. Rather than the nature of regime change, it was the perceived

"failure" of democracy and democratization[52] that was examined, and the remedies suggested to cure that "disease" are uncountable. While the problem of regime change[53] is probably the most central in Arab world studies today, we argue that such approaches to the question are failures in themselves: what doctor would prescribe a medicine without offering a diagnosis first? Instead, we inquire into "diagnostic" questions: what has changed in Arab world regimes, what has not, and what do the changes that have occurred signify? We start with the observation that there is no such thing as democracy or democratization in the Arab world today.[54] Quite naturally, most of us immediately ask "Why?" We discard any explanations that rely on what has been called "the Arab mind" or other culturalist explanations a la Huntington.[55] Similarly, we are unhappy with the assumption that blunt repression alone accounts for the fact that not a single Arab democracy has developed when all other world regions experienced democratic transitions. With few exceptions, political regimes hardly ever rely on only repression to safeguard political power. Another assumption is that incumbents rarely give up political power voluntarily. Authoritarian rulers possess a structural advantage over their democratic counterparts in maintaining power since they do not have to put power at stake in regular competitive elections. Instead, the specific type of non-democratic rule still dominating in the Arab world is (neo-) patrimonialism,[56] in which political power rests primarily on co-optation. However, political change has occurred in most Arab countries and in a variety of ways. Thus, a first puzzle enters the scene: why has any

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[52] Democracy is a political system in which competition at regular intervals for all effective positions of government power takes place. Further definitional aspects are a highly inclusive level of political participation, and civil and political liberties (cf. Diamond, L., Linz, J. and Lipset, S. (1988). *Democracy in Developing Countries*, Vol. II (Africa). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. A good operationalization is Dahl's eight institutional guarantees (For details see, Dahl, Robert (1971). *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, p. 3. Democratization is defined as the transition of a non-democratic to a democratic polity.

[53] Regime change is not equal to transition: the latter means a systemic change of the type of polity, while the former refers to any sort of change, thus also to change within a given type of political regime while the systemic attributes of the polity remain in place.

[54] Schlumberger, Oliver (2002). 'Transition in the Arab World: Guidelines for Comparison,' *RSC Working Paper 2002/22*. Florence: European University Institute.

[55] We consider such approaches as nonscientific in that they do not offer the possibility of intersubjective testability and, thus, can hardly be falsified (cf. Popper, 1935).

[56] The exceptions are Lebanon and Algeria. For the standard explanation of (neo-) patrimonialism, see Bill, James A. and Springborg, Robert (1994). *Politics in the Middle East*, 4th edn. New York: Harper Collins; Chehabi, H.E. and Linz, Juan, eds (1998). *Sultanistic Regimes*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, Chapters 1-2) refers to this type of polity as "Sultanistic Regimes."

political change taken place? While, certainly, many factors account for the existence of political change and regime change, we regard the following two as especially important since they constitute structural and longer-term variables.[57]

In our understanding, regime change is primarily induced by the following:
1. The scarcity of resources as an essentially economic factor. The assumption is that the scarcer resources become, the greater the likelihood of political change.[58]
2. The uncontested global paradigm that political change, if it occurs, should generally be in the direction of democratization. The assumption is, according to these expectations, that political rulers have to pay attention to the paradigms of capitalism and democracy and pursue at least some sort of window-dressing policy unless they can find new sources of political legitimacy.

These two factors have been structural constraints on the political options of ruling authoritarian elites in all Arab regimes since the mid-1980s. On the other hand, authoritarian rulers have a range of political options at hand that the politically powerful in democratic regimes do not have. The most important examples include the outright use of force against opponents, which is foreclosed to democratic rulers. Restricting competition (by law or actual practice) through fraudulent elections and constrained civil liberties (of the media, of association, and so on) is another area where the means of power maintenance are clearly less restricted in authoritarian regimes than in democracies. On the flip side, however, non-democratic regimes also face systemically embedded constraints, the inherent lack of democratic legitimacy being the most important one. Consequently, we add this condition to the two constraints mentioned above, yet must point out its systemic nature: while the other two constraints affect the policy options of Arab elites in a given time frame but are, in principle, open to change, the lack of democratic legitimacy is, by definition, an inherent feature of every non-democratic polity. Thus, our assumption is that the search for some form of legitimacy

[57] Apart from these structural conditions, we can identify other constraints affecting policy options at certain times only, such as strong domestic pressure through Islamist groups or current US foreign policy, characterized by an outspoken preparedness for direct military intervention. However, such constraints are temporary rather than structural.
[58] *Ibid.*, Schlumberger, Oliver (2002).

must be at the core of every regime-survival strategy in non-democratic polities. Of course, political decision-makers find themselves embedded in a given set of constraints and opportunities. The point is that in democratic systems the incumbents' maintenance of power is constrained by Dahlian contestation, but in non-democratic regimes by the lack of democratic legitimacy. The persistence and durability of all political systems, in turn, crucially depends on legitimacy or repression - and in almost all cases, on a combination of both.[59] Which variables, then, are responsible for the fact that all Arab regimes (with the exception of those countries that suffered from direct foreign military intervention)[60] managed to survive in amazing stability in times when so many dictatorships all around the world broke down? Assuming bounded rationality,[61] we agree with most of the existing literature that the top priority for authoritarian rulers is regime maintenance. What we should investigate is therefore not the "failure" of democracy, but the "success" of authoritarianism in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

ARAB EXPERIMENTS

Arab regimes' experiments with political liberalization have been a major focus of scholarly attention since the early 1990s: multiparty elections, fewer restrictions on the media, a higher level of individual freedoms, and the proliferation of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have all contributed to the impression of a more liberal Arab world. However, political liberalization was not a new phenomenon when it occurred in the early 1990s. Bahrain, for instance, had initiated parliamentary experiments between 1971 and 1975.[62] More prominently, Anwar Sadat's *infitah* policies in Egypt led not only

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[59] Even in democracies, the state preserves its monopoly on the use of violence and resorts to repression when it is threatened. At the same time, even the most illiberal regimes try to create at least a minimum of legitimacy, be it through ideology (as in fascist or communist systems), religion (as in Saudi Arabia), or economic benefits for the population (as in much of the Gulf peninsula).

[60] This happened in Iraq and in Lebanon. The Iraqi regime survived two wars, but was toppled by the US-led military campaign in spring 2003. In Lebanon, the composition of the postwar political elites significantly differs from that of the prewar elites, even though the consociational trait of the 1943 National Pact was reinvented in the Ta'if formula of 1990.

[61] From perceived options, actors will choose those perceived as serving their interests best, trying to minimize constraints and maximize opportunities. In fact, periods of liberalization have become more numerous over the past two decades. We therefore disagree with the view held, for instance, by Ehteshami and Murphy (1996), who see a general trend toward more suppressive authoritarian rule, and away from an inclusionary, corporatist state.

[62] Lawson, Fred (1989). *Bahrain: The Modernization of Autocracy*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp. 87-92.

to an economic, but also to a political, opening.[63] Political liberalization, thus, existed well before the current "wave of transitology," with its focus on democratization through liberalization. Nonetheless, there was a renewed drive toward liberalization from about the late 1980s until the mid-1990s. In 1989, Jordan saw its first parliamentary elections in decades, considered by and large as free and fair, just like the 1993 Yemeni elections. The Syrian parliament, in 1990, was enlarged to include 60 seats for "independent" candidates.

In 1992, Saudi Arabia introduced a written basic code (*al-hukm al-asasi*, in which fundamental civic rights were laid down) and established the *majlis ash-shura*, a 60-member consultative body. But nowhere did political liberalization go as far as in Algeria: the regime had permitted truly competitive local elections in 1990, and when the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS) had gained the majority of town halls, the scenario that Algeria's government, dominated by the Front de Liberation National, would become the first Arab regime to lose power through subsequent national elections seemed likely. These developments roughly coincided with the demise of the Soviet Union, when what Huntington called the "Third Wave" of transitions to democracy reached Central Eastern Europe.[64] In the light of these two simultaneous trends, it was tempting to proclaim that the Arab world had joined the global trend toward democracy.[65] Most scholars, therefore, searched for what they wanted to find, and rarely for what actually happened. Since the mid-1990s, skepticism has gained ground.[66] While most authors still waited for future steps toward more liberal regimes, some observers noted that, in fact, the opposite was happening: not increased liberties, but renewed restrictions became apparent in those countries that were watched most closely. Kienle (1998) demonstrated that political

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[63] Hinnebusch, Raymond (1985). *Egyptian Politics Under Sadat*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[64] Huntington, Samuel (1991). *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
[65] For details, see Ibrahim, Saad Eddin (1995). "Civil Society and Prospects for Democratization in the Arab World," in Augustus R. Norton (ed.), *Civil Society in the Middle East*. Leiden: Brill; Sadiki, Larbi (1997). "Towards Arab Liberal Governance: From the Democracy of the Bread to the Democracy of the Vote," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 127-48.
[66] Hudson, Michael (1996a). 'Obstacles to Democratization in the Middle East,' *Contention*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 81-105.

deliberalization in Egypt was "more than a response to Islamism" and constituted a general *reprise du control* by the regime. Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan, and Yemen joined the ranks of deliberalizing countries. Harsher press laws, massive clampdowns by security forces on opposition movements, and the repeated postponement of elections made it clear how ill-founded were any hopes for the advent of Arab liberal democracies. Yet again, the processes of deliberalization were not uniform across the region.[67] Other regimes, among them the most illiberal ones in the region, started what could be called a "belated phase of liberalization" in the late 1990s. Qatar introduced a new constitution in July 2002 which allows the population, including women, direct and secret voting for the first time in the country's history. Bahrain released political prisoners and promised to hold elections. In addition, even though deliberalization in Egypt has been evident since about 1995, the 2000 parliamentary elections were for the first time supervised by a judiciary which is not always in line with the regime.[68] A third category of countries (for example, Syria) made it through that period without any significant change in the degree of existing liberties."? These examples demonstrate that political liberalization and deliberalization are not linear processes that occur in easily discernable patterns in the MENA region. Variations in both timing and scope are significant and disprove "end of history"-style hypotheses. Political liberalization and deliberalization are successfully employed by Arab regimes as strategies for political survival.[69] Their alternating use is ultimately a function of each individual country's political situation at a given moment in time, that is, its given constraints and opportunities. It is important that, from a political-systems view, (de)liberalization does not render the regime's character "more authoritarian" or "less authoritarian," as many academics have claimed. This argument is easily falsified through a quick look at Linz's classical definition that

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[67] In fact, periods of liberalization have become more numerous over the past two decades. We therefore disagree with the view held, for instance, by Ehteshami, Anoushiravan and Murphy, Emma (1996). 'Transformation of the Corporatist State in the Middle East,' *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 753-72, who see a general trend toward more suppressive authoritarian rule, and away from an inclusionary, corporatist state.

[68] Makram-Ebeid, Mona (2001). 'Egypt's 2000 Parliamentary Elections,' *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 32-44.

[69] Brumberg, Daniel (2002). 'The Trap of Liberalized Autocracy,' *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 56-67.

explicitly acknowledges "limited pluralism"[70] as a defining element of authoritarianism. The relevant variable for classifying a polity as authoritarian is not its level of pluralism, but whether pluralism is restricted or not, which is a simple yes-or-no question. Accordingly, we should not use the terms "more authoritarian," "less democratic," or vice versa when speaking of types of political system. Political liberalization entails a widening public sphere and a greater, but not irreversible, degree of basic freedoms. It does not imply the introduction of contestation for positions of effective governing power. That elections are held in the Arab world does not contradict our argument: while the Moroccan and Jordanian parliaments, for example, may be elected democratically, this is not where strategic political decision-making takes place. Likewise, the Egyptian, Syrian, and Tunisian presidents are elected, but not in competitive or open elections. Lastly, the inner circle of approximately 15 generals who constitute le pouvoir in Algeria are not elected at all. Nowhere in the region can the center of power be contested. The common denominator of liberalization and its opposite is that systemic political transition has not occurred in a single case. This is not to say that regimes do not change or that changes beyond the transition level would not matter. But to examine such sub-systemic regime change solely with respect to the level of political liberties leaves us in a democratization trap. In addition, while liberalization does not necessarily lead to democratization, it still remains difficult to convince observers that "examining political liberalization is not an instrument for finding out whether regime change is systemic or non-systemic, let alone an instrument for tracing democratization."[71] When reflecting on regime change, we should therefore not look at (de)liberalization only. Such an exclusive focus is detrimental to our understanding of the functional logic of the existing regimes. It diverts our attention from possible non-democratic changes of regime and from important changes in regime. In sum, academic research on Arab world political regimes throughout the 1990s can be characterized as a period of waiting for expectations to materialize. Those who think that political liberalization has to tell us something about

[70] Linz, Juan (1975). 'Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes,' in Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby (eds), *Handbook of Political Science*, Vol. III. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley.
[71] Schlumberger, Oliver (2002). 'Transition in the Arab World: Guidelines for Comparison,' *RSC Working Paper 2002/22*. Florence: European University Institute, p. 24.

the possibilities of democratization ignore the categorical difference between changes in kind and changes in degree, which represents a fundamental methodological error.[72] We do not deny possible future democratizations (that is, the emergence of democratic polities) in the Arab world. However, we urge the reader to bear in mind that democratization is a process with a clear end result (in contrast to liberalization). In the course of the past decade, absolutely nothing has indicated the existence of such processes in the Arab world. While a majority of specialists agree that important changes have taken place over the past 15 years, the variables that might have changed are still waiting to be analyzed. Given that the durability of political regimes is a function of repression and legitimacy (Schlumberger, 2004), it is not surprising that the patterns of liberalization and deliberalization in the MENA region have been neither uniform nor linear. We assume that levels of repression have oscillated, but remained relatively stable, over this period. In the remainder of this article, we focus on the issue of legitimacy and its sources, examining strategies of change which are in fact designed to help incumbent regimes persist.

REGIME CHANGE IN THE ARAB WORLD

Starting with our initial assumption that an individual country's given set of opportunities and constraints determines the range of options to choose from, we find a "pool" of strategies that Arab leaders employ for the purpose of regime maintenance. However, empirical observation suggests that some of them are more important in that they have been selected more often and by more leaders than others. We investigate five core strategies of "change for stability," or strategies of adaptation. These include alterations to the polities themselves (structures), to the mechanisms according to which they work (procedures), and to the composition of socio-political elites, as follows:

1. Structures of legitimacy and strategies of legitimation: an overarching variable."
2. Elite change: adapting elites to a changed political and economic environment.

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[72] Sartori, Giovanni (1991). 'Comparing and Miscomparing,' *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 248.

3. "Imitative" institution building: establishing Western-style institutions.
4. Co-optation: restricting populism and widening the regime's power base.
5. External influences: transforming constraints into opportunities.

There are numerous interlinkages between these strategies. Obviously, co-optation is closely related to elite change. New elites, in turn, are often incorporated into institutions and thereby may change the latter's face or working mechanisms. At times, new institutions are created which may, in turn, serve to enhance legitimacy. All of the above listed strategies have an underlying relation to legitimacy, which can thus be seen as an overarching category. Structures of Legitimacy and Strategies of Legitimation In examining legitimacy and its sources, we distinguish between internal and external dimensions, the first of which refers to the explicit or diffuse support of political regimes by domestic society. "External legitimacy" signifies the extent to which political regimes are considered legitimate by the leading external powers, that is, Western governments and international organizations. This dimension is important because developing nations often depend on substantial external aid, which is, among other factors such as geo-strategic importance or international alliances, dependent on how a given regime is seen abroad. Prior to the current phase of political and economic changes, sources of internal legitimacy for the Arab states consisted of a combination of the following:
(1) allocative power through international rent income (oil and gas),
(2) traditional religious legitimacy, and
(3) distinct developmental concepts based on collectivist ideologies.[73]

[73] A fourth type of legitimacy that is generally open to both traditional and modern forms of authoritarian legitimation is charisma. Gamal Abd an-Nasir, Jordan's late King Hussein, Bourguiba in Tunisia, or Algeria's Boumedienne are cases in point. For an in- depth analysis of legitimation patterns in the Middle East, see Hudson, Michael (1977). *Arab Politics: The Search for Legitimacy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

All of them are well known,[74] but a brief description seems necessary to demonstrate their relevance in our context. The external dimension of legitimation strategies is linked to the structural constraint of global ideological paradigms. Analyzing Western interest structures (more on that below) tells us not to overestimate the efficacy of democracy and capitalism in the Arab world as concepts rigidly applied in actual policies. Direct pressure on the regimes to abide quickly and consequently by these ideas is rather low; yet they do constitute strong expectations among Western politicians, who still assume unilinear developmental progress toward democracy and market economies. Arab incumbents quickly learned the lesson of what was expected inter- nationally and adopted the "democracy language"; talking the "donor talk" became a prerequisite for political rent-seeking. "Democracy-money" that results from the successful adoption of this language is extremely attractive to Arab regimes because it consists almost exclusively of nonrefundable grants and does not increase the state's financial burden as much as economic development assistance, where the share of loans is higher. A disadvantage of "democracy- money" is that it is less easy for the state to control, since the target groups belong to civil society. However, as we explain below, new co-optation mechanisms have been engineered to maintain control over such resources and their spending. The events of 9/11 played into the hands of many Arab regimes that quickly joined the "war against terrorism": now they could suppress domestic opposition in the name of combating terrorism without raising serious Western concerns (other non-democracies, such as Russia, China, and the Central Asian republics, have also demonstrated that the demand for democratic policies and human rights has turned into a secondary issue at best). Since this new internationalized terrorism originated precisely in the Arab world, authoritarian regimes there could even more convincingly ask for active external support for

[74] For the influence of regional rent circulation on the allocative power of the regime, see Korany, Bahgat (1986). 'Political Petrolism and Contemporary Arab Politics, 1967-1986,' *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 21, pp. 66-80 and Luciani, Giacomo (1987). 'Allocation vs. Production States: A Theoretical Framework,' in Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani (eds), *The Rentier State*. London: Croom Helm. For traditional religious legitimacy, see Hudson, Michael (1977). *Arab Politics: The Search for Legitimacy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press and Anderson, Lisa (1991). 'Absolutism and the Resilience of Monarchy in the Middle East,' *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 106, No. 1, pp. 1-15. The development of progressivist countries, with the new middle classes taking over power in revolutions and coups d'etat, is described in Halpern, Manfred (1962). 'Middle Eastern Armies and the New Middle Class,' in J.J. Johnson (ed.), *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press and Trimberger, Ellen (1978). *Revolution From Above: Military Bureaucrats and Development in Japan, Turkey, Egypt, and Peru*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

oppressive policies by claiming to pursue genuinely Western interests. We turn now to the internal aspects of legitimacy, beginning with allocative power. The influx of international oil and gas rents has been crucial for regime maintenance throughout the region since the early 1970s when the system of "petrolism" emerged. Since these resources accrued directly to the regimes, they could be used for a broad-ranged subsidization of basic foodstuffs and consumer goods, but also for privileging a loyal political clientele. "Even limited revenue from abroad dramatically improves the state's ability to buy legitimacy through allocation and increases regime stability."[75] All Arab states benefited from the oil wealth of the region, albeit to different degrees. Countries with a small population and large oil exports have more allocative power than those with a large population and few mineral resources. Even the non-oil countries, however, developed into "rentier-states of [a] second order," as a look at the portion of external non-trade capital inflows in their budgets shows. Traditional religious legitimation is a mechanism only Arab monarchies can credibly invoke.[76] Rulers of the kingdoms and emirates on the Arabian peninsula, plus Jordan and Morocco, can rely upon emanation, tradition, and religion. Saudi Arabia and Jordan exemplify these countries' identities through an uncontestable link between the rulers' families and the state itself that is written down in the very names of the states as "Hashemite" and "Saudi" kingdoms, respectively. The Saudi kings have employed religion as a source of legitimacy by founding the state on the Wahhabi interpretation of Islam and on the historical alliance between the Al-Sa'ud tribe and Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. Second, legitimacy results from the kings' role as guardians of the holy Islamic cities, and from hosting millions of pilgrims who perform the Hajj to Mecca every year. The incumbents of the smaller Gulf states are all members of important families who trace their dynasties' rule back to the 19th century. Here, legitimacy is based on history, identity, and the tradition of wise leadership in strictly hierarchical Bedouin societies. Legitimation through ideology and developmentalist strategies has been pursued by the progressivist presidential republics of Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and South Yemen, at least during some phase

[75] Luciani, Giacomo (1987). 'Allocation vs. Production States: A Theoretical Framework,' in Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani (eds), *The Rentier State*. London: Croom Helm, p.76.

[76] Another phenomenon is that regimes strive for control of the "clergy" in order to have their policies legitimized by the *Ulama* (religious leaders) through *fatwa* (legal statements based on the Koran), as the Al-Sa'ud have done to justify US troop deployments after the Second Gulf War.

in their history: after a revolutionary takeover of political power or anti-colonial wars, the new regimes followed collectivist ideologies and egalitarian development models referred to as Nasserism, Ba'thism, or Arab nationalism. Common features are state-led development and, in the organization of polities, state apparatuses of elitist guidance with corporatist single-party systems, initial mass mobilization, and a strong military under the supervision of the president as the ultimate source of power and national unity. In these states, a collectivist ideology and egalitarian policies were the most important components of political legitimacy. While traditional religious legitimacy has remained essentially intact, the other two legitimating foundations of Arab states eroded structurally as a consequence of lower world oil prices (the "rent factor") or economic liberalization, or both. Development models based on import-substitution industrialization (ISI) broke down altogether during the second half of the 1980s. Thus, over the past 15 years, the Arab regimes have faced a structural loss in political legitimacy. To give but a few examples: how would regimes such as Egypt, Yemen, or Syria communicate the ideas of export-led development strategies having left their countries virtually bankrupt after import-substituting industrialization had failed? How was Saudi Arabia to explain the necessity of a prolonged US military presence on its lands? How would politically liberalizing regimes explain to their Western financiers and to their own populations their determination to hold to non-democratic policies? Throughout the Arab world, economic crises and direct or indirect foreign pressure have turned into virulent crises of legitimacy. While all Arab regimes have been affected, the formerly radical progressivist states have been hit hardest because their prime basis of legitimacy was washed away with the end of communism and the failure of ISI-based developmental strategies. Another significant change is the disappearance of the strict distinction between traditional (religion, history, and kinship) and modern (ideology and developmental strategies) forms of legitimacy. The young rulers of Morocco and Jordan, for instance, successfully combine legitimation through emanation with legitimation through modernization and policies in the style of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Abdullah II of Jordan has managed to turn the public discourse entirely away from the political sphere (liberalization) that had dominated in the 1990s under his father

and toward the economic arena.[77] Arab monarchies which had formerly faced legitimation difficulties domestically because of their traditional pro-western orientation are now on the "winning side" since alternative ideologies have failed. By contrast, the presidential republics have not only suffered from the breakdown of their ideological bases, but also from the fact that traditional religious legitimacy cannot be created as quickly as the ideological, developmentalist, or performative form of legitimacy. The fact that some presidents react defensively to the perceived re-Islamization within their societies or tolerate verdicts against the "un-Islamic" behavior of citizens,[78] might be an indicator that republican regimes aim at creating this type of legitimacy - or that they try at least not to appear as un-Islamic, as has often been claimed by the Islamist opposition. But they clearly have greater difficulties in adapting to the changed situation than those countries with a traditional religious basis of legitimacy. Elite Change "Politically relevant elites" (PREs)[79] are the pillars of the political process and therefore a crucial element to look at when studying regime change. Yet, Arab political elites have been understudied throughout the past 20 years.[80] Politically relevant elites in the Arab monarchies as well as in the republics have predominantly consisted of those who were most closely and personally affiliated to the regime leadership. Until the 1990s, loyalty was the most indispensable quality needed in order to accede to the PRE, and political competence played a secondary role. Elites remained very closed circles and access was strictly controlled by the leaders.

Within this setting, two typical patterns of elite dynamics are discernable, as follows:

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[77] New free zones, technological progress, accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), and progress in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Initiative came to dominate speeches and local media, displaying an economic activism hitherto unknown in Jordan.

[78] The Egyptian cases of Nasr Hamid Abu Zeid or Nawal as-Saadawi as well as the legal prosecution of homosexuals are prominent examples.

[79] We adopt, here, Perthes' (2004) definition of "politically relevant elites." Such elites comprise: (1) those who can wield influence on political decisions of strategic importance for a country; (2) those who can, on a second level, influence decisions in a specific issue area or implement the regime's decisions; and (3) a third circle of elites who are implementers of regime policies at the local level or who, as opposition elites, act as agenda setters. See the introductory chapter in Perthes, Volker, ed. (2004). *Arab Elites: Negotiating the Politics of Change*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

[80] For comprehensive studies on the subject, see, for instance, Lenczowski, George, ed. (1975). *Political Elites in the Middle East*. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute and Zartman, William I., ed. (1980). *Elites in the Middle East*. New York: Praeger.

1. Continuous elite rotation or reshuffling. Here, positions of political decision- making are held by elite members who, as a rule, are "circulated" from one post to the next, with the "pool" of personnel remaining stable. Thereby, no individual or group of elite members becomes strong enough to develop an independent power base. Jordan is a prime example of this type of elite politics.

2. Elite maintenance. This strategy essentially relies on keeping those with proven loyalty in their posts. One example is Mustapha Tlass, who, as an old comrade of the late Hafiz al-Asad, has retained his post as Syrian deputy prime minister and minister of defense since 1970. Both strategies aim at ensuring an uncontested leader(ship) autonomous from demands by individual elite members. If elite members raised such claims, they would have to expect their exclusion from the PRE, repression, or even physical liquidation. Well-remembered cases are former Algerian President Boudiaf (killed in 1992) or Rif'at al-Asad, brother of the late Syrian president, who went into exile after his vain attempt to take power. These are typical Arab elite politics, which have not changed. By contrast, elite change "is an at least partial exchange of structurally different elite segments, i.e. ... parts with a different background and other political priorities enter the PRE or lose their standing within the elite."[81] In the Arab world, elites have partially changed in response to new policy priorities, which, in turn, have been influenced by the structural constraints mentioned above (economic malaise, the need for referencing democracy, and economic liberalism). Not only have elites changed, but so have the mechanisms and channels of their recruitment. Looking at Arab political elites today, one evident feature is that elites have changed in their composition: in almost all Arab countries, private-sector business representatives have found their way into the PRE.[82] In turn, many elite members with a bureaucratic or military background have started to run private businesses. The main underlying reason is clearly the economic crisis and the subsequent adjustment policies that were forced upon the non-oil states: unavoidable structural changes since the late 1980s could not have been handled credibly or successfully by old-guard bureaucrats

[81] Bank, Andre and Schlumberger, Oliver (2004). 'Jordan: Between Regime Survival and Economic Reform,' in Volker Perthes (ed.), *Arab Elites: Negotiating the Politics of Change*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

[82] The focus on the amalgamation of reformist parts of the bureaucracy with export-oriented parts of the bourgeoisie in Egypt is discussed in Albrecht et al. (1998).

with a self-interest in oversized states. A new generation of technocrats acceded to the second-level elites, for example, Egyptian Minister Youssuf Boutros-Ghali, who was put in charge of negotiations with the Bretton Woods institutions and creditor organizations. This increasing technocratization of political elites went along with the loss of the dominant position of the former state bureaucracy in economic policy-making.

Some of the most dramatic challenges are faced by the state as an institution. Many of the reforms implemented under structural adjustment programmes contain an element of reduction in state structures and functions. In some cases, these reforms are based on an ideology which regards state 'institutions as inefficient, unresponsive to the needs of citizens, and inherently corrupt.'[83] The requirement to streamline state institutions and reduce expenditures has led to the privatisation of services, and the introduction of fees and targeting of interventions, especially in the education sector.

In 2002 Kuwait started allowing private universities in the country, beginning with the Gulf University for Science and Technology.[84] On September 28, 2008, MPs Abdullah Al-Roumi, Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Ali Al-Rashid, and Adel Al-Saraawi proposed a law to have the government pay half of Kuwaiti students' tuition at these private colleges.[85]

On December 26, 2003, the Kuwaiti cabinet informed the parliament that it was modifying Kuwaiti textbooks to remove references to alleged Islamic intolerance and extremism. In the ensuing debate, MP Hassan Jawhar said, "I hope the government will not bow to external blackmail and threats... and be forced to delete important sections of Islamic education." MP Mohammad Al-Busairi claimed the United States had been

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[83] Macklntosh M (1992) 'Questioning the State' in Wuyts M, Macklntosh M and Hewitt T (Eds) *Development Policy and Public Action*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

[84] "WENR, July/August 2002: Middle East". Wes.org. http://www.wes.org/eWENR/02July/Middleeast.htm. Retrieved on 2009-05-17

[85] http://www.zawya.com/Story.cfm/sidZAWYA20080928041835/Govt%20funding%20for%20Kuwaiti%20students'%20higher%20education%20at%20private%20colleges/

pressing Gulf states to change school textbooks since the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, and rejected accusations that school syllabi in the Gulf breed terrorists.[86]

Coeducation

Coeducation in Kuwait has been a contentious issue since the Islamists gained power in parliament in the 1990s. In 1996, conservative lawmakers banned coed classes at the state universities and technical colleges, including Kuwait University. In 2000, when foreign universities were first allowed to open branches in Kuwait, the ban was extended to those institutions as well.[87] On February 6, 2008, MP Ali Al-Rashid proposed a bill that would allow men and women to take classes together in Kuwaiti universities, which would reverse the 12-year-old ban on coeducation.[88]

In light of externally supported private-sector development, representatives of big business significantly increased their political influence and sometimes acceded to political posts they could use for self-enrichment via (quasi-)monopolies and to suppress prospective competition. Along with technocratization, we thus see a growing "economicization" of both political elites and policies. As a parallel development, established avenues of recruitment via military academies or through the ruling party became less attractive to the new generation. Rather, education and family were now key variables for access. While proven loyalty is still a condition sine qua non, this is no longer sufficient. Among the most obvious features of elite change in the Arab world is the inclusion of new segments comprised of smart, Western-educated, younger individuals with a technocratic or private business background who are able to negotiate with international partners on an equal footing. While this layer of the PRE still represents the offspring of well-established and well-connected families, competence as a criterion for elite selection has clearly risen in importance. At the same time, however,

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[86] "Kuwaiti MPs Oppose 'Americanizing Textbooks'". Arabnews.com. http://www.arabnews.com/?page=4&section=0&article=37332. Retrieved on 2009-05-17.
[87] "Kuwait MP Gets Threat Over Education Bill". Arabnews.com. 2008-02-07. http://www.arabnews.com/?page=4&section=0&article=106543&d=7&m=2&y=2008. Retrieved on 2009-05-17.
[88] Search - Global Edition - The New York Times". International Herald Tribune. 2009-03-29. http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/02/06/africa/ME-GEN-Kuwait-Death-Threat.php. Retrieved on 2009-05-17.

the old elites remained in place in all Arab countries, despite the fact that they have lost relative importance. Elite change has therefore been a process of widening the regimes' social bases and has greatly helped leaders maintain their ruling positions: a successful strategy for avoiding change of regime is change in regime.

Another strategy employed by Arab regimes is a new phase of institution building. One of the most salient features of institutional structures in the Arab world is the incongruity between formal and informal institutions. Often, real power structures do not correlate with formal institutions or the positions of individual decision- makers. Libya, according to its constitution, is a decentralized "mass republic" (jamahiriyya); yet, real power remains exclusively with Qaddafi and his core elite (the chiefs of the security forces, Qaddafi's sons, plus a few advisors). Neither the top representatives of the General People's Committee that acts as the government, nor the parliament (mu'tamar ash-sha'ab al-'amm), have access to the closed circles where political power is exercised.[89] In Algeria, it is not the government, but the generals in the background, who are "les decideurs." The 1990s were a period that witnessed the proliferation offormal institutions in a wide range of areas in the Arab world: from hitherto unknown ministries (for example, for privatization or the environment) to thousands of NGOs in numerous fields of activity, parliamentary bodies and political parties, institutions for the arbitration of economic disputes, ombudsmen, and many more. After independence, political parties, professional associations, and governmental structures had been created in a first "wave" of institution building. The 1990s can therefore be interpreted as a second institutional surge in the Arab world. In Algeria, one major step in this institutionalization was the 1995 presidential election. While after 1991 the military had ruled the country directly through the Haute Conseil de l'Etat (HCE), the generals later obviously perceived their rule as stable enough to retreat from the public arena and to return the nation to civilian rule. A second parliamentary chamber (Conseil de la Nation) was created and a new constitution was adopted in 1996. Parliamentary and communal elections followed in 1997 and presidential elections in 1999. But there was no doubt that real political power remained in the hands of the military. The Arab states also saw the establishment of new

[89] *Economist Intelligence Unit*, 2001

rules and procedures such as antitrust legislation, decentralization, the supervision of elections, constitutional reforms, more liberal press or election laws, and the like. Libya experienced constitutional reforms in May 2000, at the heart of which was the issue of decentralization. Some 14 ministries were abolished, and their responsibilities were (formally) transferred to roughly 2000 Basic People's Congresses. In July 2000, Egypt's Supreme Constitutional Court ordered full and independent judicial supervision of elections. Such processes represent concepts, procedures, and institutions that perform important functions in democratic political systems. For well over a decade, however, Arab rulers have found it increasingly useful to establish these in a categorically different, authoritarian context. Why? The answer lies in the functions they perform. In democracies, political parties, interest groups, private nonprofit organizations, and other institutions and procedures are instruments for autonomous societal interest aggregation and articulation, and encapsulate, in a Tocquevillean sense, the civic and political liberties that constitute the very nature of democratic polities. Obviously, this is not what authoritarian leaders have in mind. It is therefore not enough to look at a given formal institutional framework; rather, we have to examine the functions they fulfill in an authoritarian polity.[90] Arab parliaments, for instance, have no decisive legislative power. Seats are normally tightly controlled and filled with the representatives of strategically important social groups. In countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Syria, Tunisia, or Yemen parliaments do represent society at large to some extent, but function essentially as indicators of public opinion. Without risking much, the regimes can assess whether specific policies face serious resistance among the social groups and segments that their power is based on. In such cases, parliaments might be allowed to question or even criticize the minister concerned. After the Egyptian national election of December 2000, the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) managed to obtain a comfortable majority of seats only because numerous "independents" joined its ranks within days of the election. It was helpful for the regime in its strategies of power maintenance to realize that the ruling party alone was not able to mobilize enough voters to reach the majority it had had

[90] Ghandi, Jennifer and Przeworski, Adam (2001). 'Dictatorial Institutions and the Survival of Dictators.' Paper prepared for the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, August 30-September 2, 2001.

in the previous 1995 parliament - despite fraud, intimidation, and vote purchasing.[91] A third way institutional change has been used to enhance legitimacy and thereby maintain power has been to create a semblance of competition, contestation, or autonomous societal organization by allowing NGOs and even new political parties to form. When Western observers emphasize the lack of full competition in comparison to democracies, they tend to forget that most of the Arab populations have never experienced greater possibilities for political articulation than during the 1990s. Imitative institution building has thus helped bolster internal legitimacy, but even more important is the external dimension, that is, the quest for legitimation abroad. This quest is pursued in both the economic and political spheres. On the political side, strategy focuses on the establishment of institutions with a democratic facade. In the economic arena, the state's goal is to overcome the image of a corrupt, overly bureaucratic, and statist regime, and to present an outward appearance of dynamic governmental agencies. In Jordan, for instance, the governmental body responsible for the promotion and follow-up of foreign direct investment was called the Jordan Investment Corporation. Since this sounded too bureaucratic, with all the negative connotations that that entails, the name was altered to the Jordan Investment Board. Even more tellingly, the Department for Economic Development in Dubai, which has a reputation of being the unannounced ministry of the economy for the United Arab Emirates[92] and where much economic policy-making originates, has refrained from using the usual "gov.ae" of governmental institutions in its URL and instead presents itself as a dynamic "dot-com": www.dubaided.com. Such imitative institution building must not, however, be confused with a simultaneous process that could, in analogy, be called "autochthonous" or "authoritarian institution building." Both serve categorically different purposes: the former is a strategy of legitimation vis-à-vis the outside world and domestic societies, while the latter refers to institutions that are engaged in actual policy- making and thus reflect policy-induced necessities. Examples are the Moroccan practice of royally appointed "committees" that are more or less created in an ad hoc fashion for specific issue areas. These are staffed with appointed technocrats

[91] Makram-Ebeid, Mona (2001). 'Egypt's 2000 Parliamentary Elections,' *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 32-44.
[92] Economist Intelligence Unit (2001b). *United Arab Emirates - Country Profile 2001*. London: EIU.

and act as a "shadow cabinet," often against the formal government.[93] Their purpose, clearly, is not external legitimation and facilitating access to international funds. The Economic Consultative Council (ECC) that Jordan's Abdallah II established in 1999 has served similar functions. Moreover, it has been a channel for elite recruitment through which the young king has paved the way for his own loyal clientele, many of whom later assumed ministerial posts. Such genuinely "authoritarian institution building" also mitigates the structural incongruity between formal and informal institutions because they are staffed with personnel that have actual decision-making competence for the respective issue area. That formal institutions in authoritarian polities do not match with the real power structures and assume functions that differ decisively from those in a democratic context is not new. However, there has been a renewed drive toward this imitative type of institution building since the 1990s. The specific functions such institutions take on in authoritarian polities enhance the persistence of authoritarian regimes. While informal rules, procedures, and decision-making structures remain mostly unaltered, formal institutions have gradually been changed to resemble what is expected internationally from Arab governments with respect to democracy and the market economy. We can thus state that there has been a successful adaptation of the appearance of most Arab regimes to international demands to an extent that has, at times, even altered the institutional face of the polities themselves.

CHANGING PATTERNS OF CO-OPTATION

Co-optation is a third important tool of power maintenance in the Arab world, particularly for the specific authoritarian regime type (often labeled populist, corporatist, or clientelist) prevailing in that region: "Populist authoritarian regimes sought to provide an alternative to the brutal bureaucratic authoritarianism characteristic of Latin America, or the repressive Marxist-Leninism of Eastern Europe".[94] This populist authoritarian game was accomplished through a "social pact" between the ruler and the ruled, financed by the massive oil rents that flooded the region from the mid-1970s onward. We do not

[93] Maghraoui, Abdeslam (2002). 'Depoliticization in Morocco,' *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 4, p.30.

[94] Brumberg, Daniel (1995). 'Authoritarian Legacies and Reform Strategies in the Arab World,' in Rex Brynen, Bahgat Korany and Paul Noble (eds), *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World*, Vol. I: Theoretical Perspectives. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 233.

agree with the assumption that opportunities for co-optation have generally eroded with the fiscal crisis of the state and structural adjustment.[95] What we observe instead is a change in the underlying logic of the co-optation mechanisms. During the rentier era that lasted until the late 1980s, co-optation was mainly based on the distribution of wealth. The regimes' allocative power has structurally decreased over the past 15 years because rent income has shrunk, populations have grown, and economies have liberalized. This is especially true of semi-rentier states such as Egypt, Yemen, or Tunisia that have always been restricted by the modesty of their oil revenues, but is also true (though to a lesser extent) of some bigger oil and gas producers with large populations, such as Algeria and Iraq. Here, the strong impact of one of our two aforementioned structural constraints (economic crisis) becomes evident. However, this is not equivalent to a breakdown of the opportunities for co-optation. With fewer financial resources, Arab regimes simply change their co-optative strategies: they shift from allocative to inclusionary co-optation.[96] By "inclusionary," we mean the co-optation of social groups with the aim of either widening a regime's power base or directly controlling society. We can distinguish between the co-optation of economic and political actors. The former refers to the *inclusion* of business elites as a new pillar of the regime. In the political arena, co-optation is one of the core functions of imitative formal institutions (parliaments, new political parties, NGOs, and so on, as noted above) that have emerged in the context of political liberalization. Throughout the Arab world, such institutions serve as a tool for creating networks and loyalties and as channels for upward social mobility. Gaining a parliamentary seat means immunity, access to incumbents with decision-making power, the possibility of building up networks of loyalty, dependency, and patronage at the local level, and facilitated access to information that can be used for achieving material benefits. This holds true for the Syrian, Egyptian, Tunisian, and other parliaments. In turn, the individual parliamentarian becomes dependent on those who secured him or her a seat. Thus, parliaments are a prime instrument for co-optation, for buying opposition figures, and for rent allocation. Rather than being forums for competing programs or

[95] Ehteshami, Anoushiravan and Murphy, Emma (1996). 'Transformation of the Corporatist State in the Middle East,' *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 753-72.

[96] Luciani, Giacomo (1994). 'The Oil Rent, the Fiscal Crisis of the State and Democratization,' in Ghassan Salam (ed.), *Democracy Without Democrats? The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World*. London and New York: I.B. Tauris.

ideas, most political parties (along with trade unions, professional syndicates, and chambers of commerce and industry) focus on access to decision-making power and resources.[97] This also holds true for what is sometimes called the "loyal opposition," that is, for those parties that criticize individual policies, but do not challenge the regime leadership. Examples include the parties of the Syrian National Progressive Front, the Egyptian Neo-Wafd and others, and some Algerian political parties, apart from the Front de Liberation National.[98] Nongovernmental organizations as independent agents of the aggregation and articulation of societal interests have been transformed into tools of co-optative control. True, some nonprofit organizations have initially gone largely unnoticed both by Arab regimes and Western donors. Yet, as soon as such organizations try to aggregate and articulate interests autonomously, the regimes usually suppress or co-opt them and their leaders. States themselves establish parallel structures that resemble those of independent NGOs. Thus, "the dichotomy often portrayed in debates about civil society - of a state separated from and opposed to civil society - is falsely conceived".[99] A case in point is Egypt, where NGOs are heavily restricted in their financing, activities, and legal status.[100] Many of the roughly 16,000 registered NGOs in Egypt are, in fact, "GO-NGOs" (Government-Organized NGOs) or "DO-NGOs" (Donor- Organized NGOs).[101] A good deal of the existing literature still considers NGOs to be "grassroots institutions" and part of civil societies that would somehow magically challenge authoritarian rulers and pressure for "change." While the increasing number of NGOs and

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[97] Abukhalil, As'ad (1997). 'Change and Democratisation in the Arab World: The Role of Political Parties,' *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 1, p. 159 identifies a "credibility problem" regarding political parties because "regimes were able to focus on key individuals within parties to lure them with money and official posts."

[98] The only social forces to have resisted the temptations of benefiting from this system of give and take (and then only in some countries) are radical Islamists such as al-Jihad al-Islami in Palestine, the Gama'a Islamiyya in Egypt, the Groupes Islamiques Armees (GIA) in Algeria, and the Tunisian Nahda. Other Islamists, such as the Jordanian Islamic Action Front and the Yemeni Islah party, have been successfully co-opted into the regime-controlled political sphere or, like the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, have learned to play by rules that they do not set themselves. See Norton, Augustus R. (1998). 'Reflections on the Dilemma of Reform in the Middle East,' *Critique*, Vol. 13, pp. 63-6 for a discussion of the inclusion versus exclusion of Islamists.

[99] Abdel Rahman, Maha (2002). 'The Politics of 'unCivil' Society in Egypt,' *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 91, p. 32.

[100] Even the October 2002 law leaves NGOs under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs, with important control mechanisms remaining in place (cf. *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 2002).

[101] Carapico, Sheila (2000). 'NGOs, INGOs, GO-NGOs and DO-NGOs. Making Sense of Non-Governmental Organizations,' *Middle East Report*, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 12-15.

their widened activities do represent a change in themselves, they can hardly be considered as effective agents of change. Instead, by co-opting these institutions, states successfully undermine any possible trend toward "civility" and employ a strategy of soft repression. Inclusionary co-optation might be less obvious, but is not necessarily a less efficient tool for social control. It does not entail the high costs of allocative mechanisms and brings about more pluralism in the sense that it widens the elitist base of the state. Yet, this does not render the decision-making process more pluralist: political power remains excluded from contestation. Moreover, a more pluralist formation of heterogeneous and competing interests within the PRE matches perfectly with the core trait of patrimonialism: the strategy of "divide and rule" by which rulers balance competing elite factions. "Economic and political dissonance facilitates the juggling act that is central to regime survival. Rulers of liberalized autocracies strive to pit one group against another in ways that maximize the ruler's room for maneuver and restrict the opposition's capacity to work together."[102] Strategic Response to External Influences When studying exogenous factors possibly inducing political change in the Arab world, most scholars have focused on Western actors, and US administrations in particular.[103] They tend to emphasize the vulnerability of Arab regimes to direct interventions or indirect pressure. But this view ignores that western interests and foreign policies have never been homogeneous. On the contrary, there are four decisive factors that influence Western foreign policy interests and these are, at least in part, mutually exclusive. First, powerful interest groups promote unquestioned support for the state of Israel, particularly in security issues (something especially true of US foreign policy). A second core interest is to maintain political stability, not only for Israel, but for the whole region, to secure the unrestrained flow of oil to the Western economies. Third, since the failure of statist

[102] Brumberg, Daniel (2002). 'The Trap of Liberalized Autocracy,' *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 4, p.61.

[103] Some scholars have even contended that the USA is the only country still able to influence Middle Eastern affairs directly. Hudson, Michael (1996b). 'To Play the Hegemon: Fifty Years of US Policy Towards the Middle East,' *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 3, pp. 329-43 identifies, over a longer period, three main objectives of US foreign policy toward the Middle East, or "the 'holy trinity' of American interests: Israel, oil, and anti-communism." See also Karsh, Efraim (1997). 'Cold War, Post-Cold War: Does it Make a Difference for the Middle East?' *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 23, pp. 271-91. For an account of European policies toward the Arab world, see Ayubi, Nazih, ed. (1995). *Distant Neighbours: The Political Economy of Relations Between Europe and the Middle East/North Africa*. Reading, MA: Ithaca Press and Roberson, Barbara A., ed. (1998). *The Middle East and Europe: The Power Deficit*. London: Routledge.

development strategies, Western export-oriented economic players and international financial institutions (IMF and World Bank) have strongly advocated a liberalization of Arab economies. Last, since political liberalization was assumed to parallel economic openings, donors promoted the export of Western political values, namely democracy and human rights, to the region.[104] To achieve these contradictory interests simultaneously is an attempt at squaring the circle. Several Arab world regimes have been able, on numerous occasions, to make use of inconsistent Western interests in their struggle for regime maintenance; they successfully turned constraints into opportunities. For instance, regimes have tried to minimize economic pressure through their foreign policies: Jordan's peace treaty with Israel in Oslo in 1993 was rewarded with a substantial peace dividend; Syria's siding with the US-led alliance during the Second Gulf War resulted in large-scale, unconditional Western aid; and Egypt has received massive US civil and military assistance ever since the Camp David accords. Another strategy for some Arab regimes was to emphasize their efforts regarding economic reforms, receive the support of international financial institutions, and thereby distract attention from the political arena. Such attempts have occurred in Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen, but Tunisia is the most obvious "success story" of structural adjustment occurring while the violation of human rights and suppression of opposition movements continued. Obviously, regimes that guarantee political stability receive tacit or explicit Western approval. Nothing demonstrates this more clearly than Western reactions to the Algerian military's prevention of an Islamist takeover in 1991.

The tenor of research on Arab world regime change has shifted: since political liberalization has not led to democratization, some have correctly demanded that Arab world studies enter a "post-democratization era". Here, we are trying to contribute to the study of the adaptation of authoritarian rule in the Middle East and North Africa. While there is a certain oscillation between political liberalization and deliberalization, this has almost exclusively been interpreted from a "when will democracy eventually arrive" perspective, leading students of Arab world regime change to inquire into what is absent

[104] Carapico, Sheila (2002). 'Foreign Aid for Promoting Democracy in the Arab World,' *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 3, pp. 379-95.

instead of what is present. Too many teleological dead ends made it virtually impossible to find a way to analyze change other than by examining the extent of permitted liberties. This approach has not only left us without answers to the questions of whether or when transitions occur, but such an exclusive focus has also retarded investigations into other important changes. Our aim here has been to undertake a first effort to examine such other changes at the subsystemic level, that is, below the level of changes in regime type and at the level of changes within a regime. Arab authoritarian incumbents suffer from an inherent lack of (democratic) legitimacy. In addition, they face a serious economic crisis and strong Western expectations of democratization and market-economic reforms. These two additional constraints have contributed to a structural crisis of legitimacy. Since regime durability is always a function of legitimacy and coercion, the only logically possible conclusions are the following: either Arab regimes have lost overall stability or they have somehow successfully compensated for this initial loss of legitimacy, given that the overall level of repression appears stable over the period examined. The first assumption can easily be falsified through empirical observation: Arab regimes are durable. Therefore, they must have regained legitimacy. Henceforward, we should examine dimensions that go "beyond coercion"[105] in order to explain the durability of authoritarianism in the Arab world at times when democratization processes have occurred in every other region of the world. We have identified five core areas where such sub-systemic changes have occurred. In asking how change occurred, we analyzed each of these areas, finding that the regimes' strategies formed a resource pool for each of the Arab leaders, who, according to their own particular needs, handled them with enormous flexibility in order to overcome the structural crisis of legitimacy that they encountered in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Of course, engaging in this kind of research is like opening a Pandora's box: there might be more variables than the ones proposed here,[106] and their impact on the polity as well as at the policy level is not easy to assess. Furthermore, it is difficult to measure the degree of legitimacy a certain policy

[105] Dawisha, Adeed and Zartman, William, eds (1988). *Beyond Coercion: The Durability of the Arab State*. London: Croom Helm.

[106] We concentrate here on politics proper and do not discuss authoritarian regime stability from a political economy point of view, which might open up yet another perspective on the issue. Economic interactions in authoritarian contexts are often embedded in variables of power maintenance, as proposed here, and are thus secondary in comparison to the factors discussed in this chapter.

brings about. It is difficult to generalize on when and to what degree which kinds of strategies are employed. We regard our findings more as preliminary hypotheses than as final results, even though we have tried to support our argument with empirical evidence. However, more empirical case studies are urgently needed in Arab world studies today. We must also allude to the fact that we did not conceptually distinguish between different regime types within the region, for instance, between revolutionary republics and traditional monarchies. This is not to neglect existing differences or to lump together countries which certainly do differ tremendously in economic, social, and also in political terms. Strikingly, however, the variables of authoritarian resilience discussed above can be found throughout the region. The differences in the timing, scope, and degree of the strategies employed by Arab regimes are manifold and will hopefully trigger further empirical and comparative research. These problems notwithstanding, we can state that the common denominator of all of these changes in the functional logic of these regimes is that they served to foreclose the emergence of autonomous social forces. The only such forces that exist in a number of Arab countries are militant Islamist, anti-systemic opposition groups that have resisted the temptation of co-optation. When this occurs, however, and co-optation ceases to be an option, the incumbents' only answer is repression. Apart from non-co-opted Islamist groups, there are absolutely no social forces with significant organizational capacities that could be said to be independent from their respective regimes in terms of finance, organization, and personnel. This is one decisive way in which the Arab world differs from other developing regions where democratization has occurred. The constellation of political actors is implicitly assumed by most theory concerned with transition to exist in every nation.[107] However, such a constellation does not exist in the Arab world. In no other region have trade unions, syndicates, and professional associations been penetrated as deeply and profoundly by

[107] Przeworski, Adam (1986). 'Some Problems in the Study of Transition to Democracy,' in G. O'Donnell, P. Schmitter and L. Whitehead (eds), *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, Vol. 3. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press 50 ff., for instance, assumes not only "fissures within the ruling bloc," but also "radical" and "moderate" factions within the opposition. See also Przeworski, Adam (1992). *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reform in Eastern Europe and Latin America*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press. The problem with regard to the Arab world is that hardly anything exists that could be termed an equivalent to what Przeworski conceives as "opposition" - except, as mentioned, militant Islamist groups, which are rigorously oppressed. See also Stepan, Alfred (1997). 'Democratic Opposition and Democratization Theory,' *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 657-73.

authoritarian rule as in the Arab world. Whenever collective social actors seem to emerge in an autonomous fashion anywhere in the Arab world, regimes react immediately: depending on the perceived strength and importance of such actors as well as on the potential threat that they could pose, Arab regimes either co-opt or suppress them. This disproves the notion of non-democratic rule as "pre-modern" or "underdeveloped" when compared to democracy as it prevails in theoretical modernization types of analyses.[108] Quite the contrary, Arab political rule has proven enormously complex and flexible in maintaining power. To speak of a "failure of democracy" is therefore a profound misconception of the working mechanisms of Arab politics and state-society relations. From our point of view, successful democratization would, rather, be the "failure of authoritarianism" - a failure that has been thoroughly avoided by Arab regimes. Recent developments in other world regions confirm two aspects. First, the Arab world is not located on "another planet"; developments elsewhere, too, demonstrate the resilience of non-democratic governance even when regime change has occurred. Tracing the refinement, the re-equilibration, and the adaptive capabilities of non-democratic political rule, and searching for commonalities and differences when comparing states or regions, will constitute the most challenging tasks in comparative politics and area studies for years to come.

Despite the differences and difficulties in defining minimally acceptable features of a democracy, one would agree on at least the following: none of the constituent states in the region has reached a level of democratization that would guarantee a path toward sustainable democracy and prevent a future return to non-democratic governance and de-secularization and deliberalization of the economy and society. Moreover, the absence of stable democracies increases actual and potential instability throughout the region. Repression of opposition forces and suppression of civil society development are but a few examples of the structural violence created by authoritarian or quasi-democratic regimes. Although many factors contribute to the propensity of nations to wage either

[108] Brooker, Paul (2000), *Non-Democratic Regimes: Theory, Government & Politics*. New York: St. Martin's Press, p. 129 even argues that a regime of personalist rule signals the "degeneration" of authoritarianism, as "the regime loses some of its modern structure and some of the credibility of its distinctively modern claim to favor democracy."

war or peace against their own populations and their neighbors, socially, politically, and economically stable systems certainly raise the odds that peace prevails over war. We are undoubtedly many years away from reaping peace dividends from sustained democratization processes in the Arab world. In addition, most contributions to this volume show that, if anything, reform processes toward political, economic, and cultural liberalization have so far brought much instability and violence to the region, as traditional (often religious) values continue to clash with secular ethics, norms, and practices. Four issues are particularly important in preventing transitional violence and in neutralizing threats to nascent democratization processes. First, broad sectors of the population need to be familiar with, and ideally fully embrace, civic virtues and a democratic political culture, manifested through the presence of a healthy, functioning, and influential civil society. Second, political leaders must be fully committed to reform processes, to the extent that they are prepared to relinquish some of their own powers to strengthen democratic governance. Third, regional conditions must be favorable – including the resolution of grave problems that divide the region and pitch individual states or groups of states against each other (such as the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, the ongoing military campaign against Iraq, or the support by some, and objection by others, of America's continued "war on terrorism"). Fourth, external conditions must be conducive to conflict resolution and peace, including the absence of manipulative external powers' involvement in regional politics and the presence of international economic conditions that will allow Arab world countries to bear the cost of democratic governance and the provision of social and other services that are necessary to maintain popular support during the inevitable ups and downs of transition and reform periods. Transitions to democracy can be violent – more violent than the structural violence that is ever-present under authoritarian rule. On the one hand, democratization processes are stifled because of fears that an opening of the system might trigger the rise of democratically elected, but anti-democratically inclined, political parties and movements. On the other hand, commitment to democratization is necessary to establish, it is to be hoped at some not too distant point in the future, a more accountable, just, and transparent political order. Most contributors agree that, in order to push forward democratization processes while advancing internal and regional peace, reforms must be

gradual and monitored and controlled from the top, and they must be supplemented by a similarly gradual process toward the establishment of a broad-based and broadly supported civil society. Only such gradual reform processes will be successful in the end. Democratization is a "journey" that takes time to be completed, not an event that can be planned and executed at will.

The Arab world is not one monolithic entity. The domestic scene changes from one region to another, and in some instances the differences are quite fundamental. A brief comparative glimpse of the Kuwaiti scene and the Saudi scene, or the Jordanian and Algerian scenes, can easily illustrate the discrepancies. There are definitely Islamic parties that are fully engaged in the political, social and cultural debates throughout the Arab world, but the level of engagement is really determined by the varying domestic scenes, with foreign intervention a complicating factor. Mainstream Muslim Brotherhood organizations do not enjoy the same treatment or status everywhere. They occasionally act as moderating forces within civil society, ready to engage politically when the conditions allow it. Jordan is an example of such a scenario. It is essential that political organizations including Islamists agree to the basic concept of rotation of power. Equally important is for the players to agree on legislation that calls for cultural pluralism, tolerance and gender equality. Here, reformers within the region believe that outside allies can be of crucial help. Unfortunately, the gap between US action and attitude is a complicating factor, especially in relation to Muslim groups like Hizbollah in Lebanon and Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Palestine. These organizations are considered terrorist by the US and some of its allies, while the majorities not only of the people of Lebanon and Palestine but the region as a whole do not share the US categorization. The use of violence by these organizations, although morally debatable, is a collective reaction to foreign interference and occupation. But, if we address the core issue, the transformation of these organizations into full-fledged political parties is possible. Unfortunately, some of the western powers for the most part are ideologically driven, while the Arab world is reform driven.

Mustafa Hamarneh and his pro-democracy compatriots in the Arab world are "reform driven", not "ideologically driven". The complex issue of reform tops the domestic agenda in almost all Arab societies today. This in itself is a very significant development. However, the public debates on the various issues unified under the theme of reform have thus far not been enriching. The neo-liberals' inability to widen and deepen the process of democratization, coupled with the popular perception that they openly embrace unpopular American policies in the region, has limited their ability to mobilize the embryonic, progressive political forces in support of a genuine process of reform. Hence the neo-liberals in power must democratize the system, the pro-democracy activists must not throw the baby out with the bathwater, and America must be more evenhanded with the region. If these conditions are met, one can look forward to a healthier debate on reform and ultimately the implantation of a process of political and economic reform that addresses local needs in the Arab world.

According to Alex MacGillivray, senior partner at AccountAbility, one of the co-authors of a new report entitled Responsible Competitiveness in the Arab World 2009, the Arab World wants to be innovative and is looking to develop education in the region, but it's not going to be easy "to really scale this up." Civil society is regarded as a really important driver of responsible competitiveness and this is now acknowledged in the Arab world. "Top of the Arab Responsible Competitiveness Index is Kuwait followed by Saudi Arabia, asserts MacGillivray. According to AccountAbility, in terms of policy drivers, Saudi Arabia is taking a lead in reforming policies and enforcing regulation. The report singles out seven key responsible competitiveness drivers in the Arab World. These are responsible business climate, environmental policy, labour policy, governance, product and service innovation, talent and engaged stakeholders.[109]

[109] The report contains analysis of Arab issues and opportunities, as well as essays on pressing challenges from seven sustainability leaders. AccountAbility, a non-profit global think-tank, argues that evidence from more than 100 countries indicates that successful economies are those in which competitiveness, sustainability and business responsibility go hand in hand. The report, *Responsible Competitiveness in the Arab World 2009*, was led by Alex MacGillivray and Simon Zadek at AccountAbility and Darin Rovere at Sustainability Excellent Arabia. The foreword to the report is by Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan. The report was supported by the Arab Sustainability Leadership Group and sponsors included Abraaj, Aramex, JorAmCo and HBS.
http://knowledge.insead.edu/ExaminingresponsiblecompetitivenessintheArabWorld090605.cfm

CHAPTER IV

KUWAIT'S TRYST WITH DEMOCRACY

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the problems which democratization poses to the traditional political system of Kuwait and its tryst with democracy as a result of the discovery of oil. The intent of the study is to determine first the extent to which the Kuwait monarchy has been able to cope with problems of democratization and liberalization, and secondly the effect of the consequent changes upon its political authority and upon the state's traditional political institutions. The chapter also investigates a brief survey of the country's economic and political structure in the pre-oil period. Next it analyzes the welfare state with education as a factor established in the aftermath of the oil boom, with special attention to the enormous socio-economic changes in context of liberalization which have swept Kuwait. Finally, the chapter focuses on the political consequences of democratization for these socio-economic transformations in context of liberalization. The chapter also analyzes the weaknesses affecting, and challenges facing, Kuwait's political system, balancing this assessment with a consideration of more positive factors, which have led to the restoration of parliamentary life after each period of dissolution. Kuwait experienced the fifth dissolution in its parliamentary experience.[1] On 3 July 1999, elections were held with 288 candidates competing for the 50 parliamentary seats. The election campaign was short but heated, with candidates charging the government with conspiracy, interference in the elections, and impotence. On June 29, 2006, for the first time universal suffrage was in force. It saw the participation of women in national elections. The voters selected the 50-members of the country's national Assembly. It is estimated that there are around 340,000 eligible to vote in Kuwait of which 57 per cent are women; the turnout was 35 per cent. In 2006 elections, there were 27 women candidates among the 249 in the electoral fray. But the repeated (five times) dissolution of Parliament raises many

[1] For an account of the two previous dissolutions of 1976 and 1986, see Jill Crystal. (1992). *Kuwait: The Transformation of an Oil State*, Boulder: Westview, pp. 91-123, and Ghanim al-Najjar (1996). *Madkhal li-Masirat al-Tatawwur al-Siyasifi al-Kuwayt (Introduction to Kuwaiti Political Development)*, Kuwait: Qurtas Publishing, second edition.

questions about democracy in Kuwait, which is located in a region that does not look favorably on democratic reforms. The Emir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah dissolved the National Assembly of Kuwait on 18 March 2009 over accusations of supposed abuse of democracy and threats to political stability. An early parliamentary election was held in Kuwait on 16 May 2009, the country's third in a three-year period. It also raises a legitimate question concerning the reason(s) behind the uniqueness of Kuwait, with its relatively open society. Why is there a democracy in Kuwait in the first place? Does it really reflect education as a factor towards empowerment within Kuwaiti society? Why have other states in the region moved so slowly, while Kuwait enacted a constitution in 1962? And what are the major challenges facing democracy in Kuwait? This chapter attempts to answer these questions, and to explore the strengths and weaknesses of a rare continuing democracy in the Arab world, despite the limitations.

Early Kuwaitis who settled the area more than two centuries ago chose Sabah the First, the founder of the present ruling family, as their ruler.[2] They agreed that he would handle the daily affairs of the society, and that they would support him financially, provided that he consulted with them on major decisions. This political formula created complete interdependence between the ruler and the ruled, and could rightly be described as "joint governing". Jill Crystal describes the situation accurately: "This Sabah preeminence departed significantly from inherited political institutions, where a leading Sheikh ruled with only limited and contested power..., an individual Sheikh's right to rule, and to pick his successor was still more constrained.. .Sabah family rule, though well established, remained limited until well into the twentieth century. This was because the merchants, owing to their financial power, could still check Sabah designs. By the end of Mubarak's rule (1915), Kuwait had an economic and social structure that reflected a century of pearling and trading. Its political structure consisted of a ruling Sheikh, whose preeminence was secure, but constrained by the merchant elite, tied to the economy of pearling and trade."[3] Although external factors naturally affected the political system,

[2] Alan Rush, Al-Sabah. (1987). *History and Genealogy of Kuwait's Ruling Family, 1752-1987*. London: Ithaca Press.
[3] Jill Crystal. (1990). *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 21, 25, 33.

these internal dynamics functioned as a political infrastructure, directing and balancing the political process. It was within this framework that Kuwait created its first Shura Council in 1921, and an elected Legislative Council in 1938.[4]

DEMOCRACY, LIBERALIZATION AND POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES

The point at issue is whether Kuwait's monarchy has been able to cope with the problems posed by modernization. The Ruler here has undoubtedly been concerned with the same dilemma which has confronted his counterparts elsewhere in Asia and Africa. For, on the one hand, centralization of power in this institution is necessary to promote social, cultural and economic reform, while, on the other hand, this centralization makes difficult or impossible the expansion of the power of the traditional polity and the assimilation into it of the new groups produced by modernization: an intelligentsia, a commercial or entrepreneurial group, and professional and managerial types. The participation of these groups in politics seemingly could come only at the expense of the monarchy. Hence, we have to see how the Kuwait Monarchy has resolved this dilemma and which of the following three strategies were adopted: (a) reducing or ending the role of monarchical authority and so promoting movement toward a modern, constitutional monarchy in which authority is vested in the people, in parties and in a parliament; (b) or combining monarchical and popular authority in the same political system; (c) or maintaining itself as the principal source of authority in the political system and so minimizing the disruptive effects upon itself of the broadening political consciousness.

From its earliest days, the Kuwait Government was regarded as being patriarchal in character; it never displayed any signs of autocratic despotism. The power of the sheikhs was usually limited by custom and by the checks exerted by the strong oligarchy.[5] The traditional decision-making apparatus was a functional partnership between the royal family, Al Sabah sheikhs, and the representatives of the great families, Al Ghanim, Al

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[4] Najat al-Jasim (1973). *Al-Tatawwur al-Siyasi wa al-Iqtisadi li-l-Kuwayt bayn al-Harbayn (The Political and Economic Development of Kuwait Between the Two Wars)*, Cairo: Sijil al-'Arab Press; also Khalid al-'Adsani, Nisf (1978). *'Am li-l-Hukm al-Niyabifi al-Kuwayt (Half a Year of Representative Rule in Kuwait)*. Kuwait: Al-Marzuq Press.

[5] Frank Tachau. (1975). *Political Elites & Political Development in the Middle East*, John Wiley and Sons. New York, p.185

Khalid, Janaat and Al Salih, etc. although the carrying out of the policy normally was the exclusive domain of the sheikhs. The beginning of the erosion of the role of public opinion and public consultation coincided with Sheikh Mubarak's assumption of power in 1896. After his death in 1915 some attempts were made to reassert the customary consultative role.[6] The attempts were successful in 1921, when at the time of his accession as Amir, Sheikh Ahmed Ibn Jabir agreed to establish a Consultative Assembly of 12 delegates chosen by the notables. The experiment with the Assembly, however, was not a success, as the members were too divided to face the Sheikh as a united body and meetings ceased. Further efforts were made to revive the Assembly between 1930 and 1938. Though these were fruitful, they were nevertheless short-lived owing to the vulnerability and weakness of the would-be parliamentary movement.

The 1950's witnessed the creation of a far weaker form of consultative chamber; namely, the Supreme Council.[7] But this council was drawn mainly from members of the Al Sabah family, with priority to those who supervised executive departments. Thus, Sheikh Mubarak's concept of a centralized ruling apparatus persisted until 1961. Nevertheless, experience with a formal institutionalization of the consultative and decision-making process was clearly not new to Kuwait. In 1961 Kuwait was confronted with a constellation of difficulties: (1) Iraq's threat to seize the country, (2) a rising flood of alien immigrants, (3) the growing pressure of an emerging middle class denied political power at home, and (4) problems associated with rapid economic and social change.[8] The Amir was convinced that the country was in the midst of a serious political crisis and that is was advisable to dismantle the patriarchal system which vested political power solely in the ruling family. So in a move to widen the arena of political participation, he called in December 1961 for the election of a Constituent Assembly to draft a constitution and to act as a temporary parliament for the emirate. On the recommendation of an Egyptian constitutional expert, the Constituent Assembly presented a draft constitution which was promulgated in November 1962 by the monarch.[9] The constitution provided for the

[6] Fekri Shehab, *op. cit.*, p. 127.
[7] Ghanim El Najar. (1986). *Notes on Kuwait Political Economy*, Kuwait University, p.32.
[8] H.A. El Ebraheem, *op. cit.*, p.123.
[9] J. Thompson. (1966). *Modernization of the Arab World*. Van Nostrand, Princeton, p.128.

creation of a National Assembly composed of fifty deputies elected by eligible Kuwaiti citizens. The tenure of the legislature was to be four years. Each of the emirate's constituencies was to be represented by five deputies. Cabinet personnel, up to one-third the number of the elected members, may also sit in the assembly by virtue of office, and because many Al Sabah sheikhs hold cabinet portfolios, the ruling house has had ample representation in the legislature.[10] Legislative power would be exercised by both the assembly and the amir. For example, the sole responsibility of appointing the cabinet rested with the amir, but the assembly could override any veto initiated by the amir by a two-thirds majority vote. Deputies were authorized to scrutinize the budget, ratify or reject all treaties pertaining to peace, natural wealth, resident status and finance. Furthermore they were free to question any minister, discuss any major policy, and pass a motion of no-confidence on any individual minister. Confidence votes, on the performance of the prime minister and Cabinet at large, however, were completely prohibited. If a situation developed where there was a breakdown in co-operation between the assembly and the prime minister, then it would be left to the amir to dismiss the latter or to call for an election of a new assembly.

From its institution in 1963, the Kuwait national assembly was dominated by three major political and social forces: the prominent businessman, the bedouins and the middle class. The prominent businessmen had played a significant role in the political history of the country. Their contribution in 1938 events was devastating. In July of that year they led the movement which later culminated in the establishment of the legislative Assembly. By virtue of the law which was promulgated later by the Ruler, the Assembly exercised legislative, executive as well as judicial powers. Owing to the growing conflict between The Ruler and the Assembly, the latter was dissolved in December 1938.[11]

[10] Al Marayati, *op. cit.*, p.286.
[11] Jasim Khalaf, *op. cit.*, pp.92-93.

TABLE I: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS BY DISTRICT[12]

District	Name	Affiliation	Sect	Prior Experience	Education	Assumed Office	Born In	Tribe
1	Abdullah Al-Roumi	Independent (Liberal-leaning)	Sunni	Lawyer	Law	1985	1949	
1	Abdulwahed Al-Awadhi	Independent	Sunni	Kuwait Air Force	Aviation, US Marine Academy	2003	1955	
1	Adnan Zahid Abdulsamad	National Islamic Alliance	Shia	Oil Ministry	Political Science	1981	1950	
1	Ahmed Lari	National Islamic Alliance	Shia	Municipal Council	Statistics	2006	1955	
1	Hassan Jawhar	Shia (Unaffiliated)	Shia	Professor at Kuwait University	PhD in Political Science	1996	1960	
1	Hussein Al-Qallaf Al-Bahraini	Shia (Unaffiliated)	Shia		Sharia	1996	1958	
1	Hussein Nasser Al-Huraiti	Independent (close to government)	Sunni	Judge, Lawyer	Law	2006	1962	Al-Awazem
1	Mikhled Al-Azmi	Islamist (Salafi)	Sunni	Municipal Council	Geography	1996	1961	Al-Awazem
1	Mohammed Al-Kandari	Islamic Salafi Alliance	Sunni		Medicine	2008	1971	Al-Kandari
1	Saleh Ashour	Justice and Peace Alliance	Shia	Kuwait Air Force	Economics	1999	1952	
2	Abdulatif Al-Ameeri	Hadas	Sunni	Lawyer	Sharia studies, Kuwait University	2008	1966	
2	Ali Al-Rashid	National Democratic Alliance	Sunni	Lawyer	JD, International Arab University	2003	1967	

[12] Kuwait Politics Database, 2008 *Election Results*.

2	Jamaan Al-Harbash	Hadas	Sunni	Professor	PhD in Islamic Ideology	2006	1970	
2	Jassem Al-Kharafi	Independent (businessman/liberal)	Sunni	Director of Al-Kharafi Group	Business Administration, Manchester Trade Faculty	1975	1940	
2	Khalaf Al-Enezi	Independent (close to government)	Sunni	National Council	Teachers' College	1981	1952	Al-Enezi
2	Khaled Al-Sultan Bin Essa	Islamic Salafi Alliance	Sunni	Chairman of Kuwait Graduates Society		2008	1940	
2	Marzouq Al-Ghanim	Independent (businessman/liberal-leaning)	Sunni	Petrochemicals	Mechanical Engineering	2008	1968	
2	Mohammed Al-Abduljader	National Democratic Alliance	Sunni	Ministry of Finance	PhD in Geopolitics	2008	1964	
2	Mohammed Al-Mutair	Islamist (businessman/Salafi)	Sunni	Investment Company	Business	2003	1969	
2	Mohammed Al-Sager	National Democratic Alliance	Sunni	Banking	Economics	1999	1951	
3	Abdulaziz Al-Shayji	Hadas	Sunni	Municipal Council	Architectural Engineering, University of Miami	2008	1967	
3	Adel Al-Saraawi	Islamist (Independent)	Sunni	Office for Assessment of Iraq Invasion Damage	Accounting	2003	1962	
3	Ahmed Al-Mulaifi	Islamist (Independent)	Sunni	Lawyer	MA in Law	1996	1956	
3	Ahmed Al-Sadoun	Popular Action Bloc	Sunni		Literature	1975	1934	
3	Ali Al-	Islamic Salafi	Sunni	Professor	PhD in	2006	1958	

	Omair	Alliance			Chemistry			
3	Faisal Al-Muslim Al-Otaib	Islamist (Independent)	Sunni	Professor	MA in Political History, University of Wales	2003	1962	Al-Otaibi
3	Nasser Al-Sane	Hadas	Sunni		PhD in Business Administratio n	1992	1955	
3	Roudhan Al-Roudhan	Conservative	Sunni	Municipal Council		2008	1965	
3	Saleh Al-Mulla	Liberal	Sunni	Diplomat	BA in Business, Kuwait University	2008	1971	
3	Waleed Al-Tabtabai e	Islamist (Salafi)	Sunni	Professor, Kuwait University	PhD in Islamic Studies, Al-Azhar	1996	1964	
4	Ali Al-Daqbaashi	Islamist (close to government)	Sunni		Management	2003	1965	Al-Rashay dah
4	Daifallah Bouramiya	Islamist (Independent)	Sunni	Doctor	MA in Public Health	2003	1957	Al-Mutairi
4	Hussein Quwaian Al-Mutairi	Islamist (Independent/triba l)	Sunni	Doctor	Medicine	2008	1968	Al-Mutairi
4	Mohammed Al-Rasheedi	Islamist (Independent)	Sunni	Education training	PhD in Law	2008	1964	Al-Rashay dah
4	Mohammed Hayef Al-Mutairi	Islamist (Salafi)	Sunni	Kuwait Municipality	Islamic Studies	2008	1964	Al-Mutairi
4	Askar Al-Enezi		Sunni			2008		Al-Enezi
4	Musallam Al-Barrak	Popular Action Bloc	Sunni	Municipal Council	Arabic literature	1996	1956	Al-Mutairi

4	Nasser Al-Duwailah	Islamist (Independent)	Sunni	Army commander; lawyer	Military science; Sharia	2008	1956	Al-Rashaydah
4	Rija Hujailan Al-Mutairi	Independent	Sunni	Ministry of Education	Management	2008	1941	Al-Mutairi
4	Saad Al-Khanfour Al-Rasheedi	Independent	Sunni	Interior Ministry		2008	1965	Al-Rashaydah
5	Abdullah Al-Barghash	Islamist (Salafi)	Sunni	Customs Department	Customs Affairs	2008	1962	Al-Ajman
5	Abdullah Al-Fahma	Independent (close to government)	Sunni			2003	1958	Al-Awazem
5	Ali Al-Hajri	Independent (close to government)	Sunni	Kuwait Municipality	Literature	2003	1962	Al-Hawajir
5	Essam Al-Dabbous	Independent (close to government)	Sunni	Kuwait Municipality	Arts	2003	1962	Al-Fadul
5	Fahad Al-Azmi	Independent (close to government)	Sunni	Interior Ministry		1999	1954	Al-Awazem
5	Jabir Al-Azmi	Islamist (Independent)	Sunni	Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs	Sharia	2006	1970	Al-Awazem
5	Marzouq Al-Hubaini Al-Azmi	Popular Action Bloc	Sunni	National Council	Business Administration	1996	1952	Al-Awazem
5	Mohammed Al-Huwaila Al-Ajmi	Independent	Sunni	Professor	PhD in Management, Yarmouk University	2008	1971	Al-Ajman
5	Mohammed Faleh Al-Ajmi	Islamist (Independent)	Sunni	Maritime business	MA in Business Administration	2008	1955	Al-Ajman
5	Sadoon Al-Otaibi	Independent	Sunni			2008		Al-Otaibi

Before the discovery of oil, the business oligarchy provided the emirate with most of its income through taxes. Inauguration of the oil era, however, reversed relationship of economic dependency. The monarchy emerged as the sole distributor of the oil revenues and hence the business oligarchy depended on it for its livelihood. Nevertheless, as noted above, the business oligarchy remained the major beneficiary of this diffused wealth. The prominent businessmen were very influential in the early assemblies of 1963 and 1967 gaining respectively 16 and 17 seats. It was from 1971 onwards that their share in the number of seats began to be reduced substantially, going from thirteen down to only two. The eclipse of the business oligarchy could only be explained by the rising power of the two remaining forces: namely, the bedouins and the middle class. The bedouins - a name used to denote the inhabitants of the desert - emerged in particular as the most dominant force in the Assembly. This group comprises mainly the following tribes: Anaza, Shammer, Ajman, Mutair, Dhafir, Awazim, Al-Rashaidh, Al-Murra, Qahtan and Bani Khalid.[13] Before the advent of the oil industry the bedouins depended on nomadic herding to generate their income. With the striking of oil in the late 1940's, the bedouins were forced to abandon this economic activity as they found it extremely difficult to cope with the soaring cost of living that accompanied the oil boom. They soon settled in the cities in large numbers and sought jobs in the police, the army and the oil industry. The granting of Kuwaiti citizenship - made possible by the naturalization decree of 1959 would facilitate the integration of the bedouin into national political life. To obtain more educational as well as health services for their regions, the bedouins appealed to their fellow kinsmen for electoral support. Their share of the Assembly seats went up from 19, or 38% in 1963 to 27, or 54% in 1985. The third dominant force in the Kuwait National Assembly has been the middle class. This social stratum - being the by-product of social mobilization - comprises different factions such as the politicized nationalists, the religious activists, and the politically uncommitted. The first faction - the politicized nationalists - is strongly committed to promoting Arab unity and to putting an end to colonialism in the area.[14] This faction is represented by two groups: 1) Al-tajammu'al-dimuqrati (Democratic Bloc), which is led by a prominent physician, Ahmed Al Khatib,

[13] Jasim Khalaf, *Ibid.*, pp.108-9
[14] *Ibid*, p.117-118.

and 2) Al-Kutlah Al-Wataniyeh (National Bloc), headed by Jassem Al-Qutami, a member of one of the prominent families. The second faction, the religious activists, mainly comprises the Muslim fundamentalists known in Kuwait as Jam'iyat Al-Islah and Jama'at Al-Salafiyyn. This faction seeks to spread Islamic doctrine throughout the Muslim world. The third faction is made up of the politically uncommitted. The majority of members of this group are Kuwaiti professionals. In the Assembly they are generally categorized as the most educated and modern-minded members. They do not usually adhere to any political ideology and tend to take an independent stand on most political and social issues.

Since 1981 the middle class has ranked as the second most important force in the Kuwait national assembly. It emerged only once as the most numerous force, in the 1975 election, gaining 23 seats out of 50, but that role was short-lived. For in the 1981 election the group's share shrank to only 15 seats. This result was attributed mainly to the redistricting policy implemented by the government in that year. The ten constituencies were increased to 25; a measure dictated by the building of new residential quarters in El Jahra El Jadida (New Jahra) and Sabah El Saleem. The redistricting had favoured more the bedouins whose share promptly rose from 21 to 27 seats.[15] Middle class decline, however, was short-lived, since it managed in 1985 to regain most of the seats lost in the 1981 election.

As with many other parliaments, the Kuwait National Assembly has not enjoyed much autonomy and rarely initiated policy.[16] But it did discharge its function of criticizing and exposing the government more effectively. Furthermore, it endowed the major political and social forces in the country - the bedouins, the urban merchants and businessmen, and the nationalists, intellectuals and professionals - with an institutionalized means of expression. The bedouins were used frequently as a counterweight to the radicalism of

[15] For more information regarding the 1981 redistricting, see A. Al-Assiri and K. Al-Monoufi. (1986). 'The 1985 Kuwait Parliamentary Election', *Journal of Social Sciences*, Kuwait University, Vol.14, Spring.
[16] S. Al-Agad. (1976). 'Stability & Destabilization in Kuwait' *Journal of International Politics*, Cairo, Jan., p.152.

the professionals and the nationalist intellectuals.[17] Although sometimes impatient with the family's rule, the business oligarchy did not agitate for major reforms, as they were in an economically advantageous position. It was the nationalist intellectuals led by Dr Ahmed Al-Katib who mounted the fiercest criticism against the political and social order and often played the role of opposition inside the Assembly. This role was apparent in the debate over oil policy. As the country's chief concern, oil had, not surprisingly, dominated the debates of the National Assembly throughout the first decades of its existence: 1963-75. The debates over oil policy were exemplified in the scrutiny of the following issues: the principle of royalty expensing[18], the utilization of natural gas[19], the

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[17] Ahmed El-Baghdadi. (1985). 'Democratic Experiment of Kuwait', *Al-Bahith*, (Beirut) No.38, June.

[18] The principle of royalty expensing was the first oil issue to be debated by the National Assembly. It was a formula devised by the Middle East oil-producing countries at the beginning of the 1960's in order to increase their share of the oil revenue. Previously the practice which was based on the so-called fifty-fifty agreements signed by the foreign operating companies with many host countries in the 1950's was that when the operating company exported its crude oil, it paid a royalty to the host government amounting to 12.5 per cent of the value of the oil at the 'posted' price less the cost of production, then paying income tax at 37.5 per cent of the total value of oil at that price, the host government thus receiving 50 per cent of the value. As the companies were free to fix the posted price, they used their right to reduce it when the price at which they were able to sell the oil fell below the posted price. This of course had the effect of unilaterally diminishing the revenues of the host government. To correct this, the host countries initiated the principle of royalty expensing which was accepted by the companies. In Kuwait this was apparent in the agreement which was reached between the government and the owners of Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) in Dec. 1964. This meant that royalty payments on crude oil (12.5 per cent of the posted price) were to be treated as cost items in calculating the taxable income instead of crediting it against the actual tax as otherwise assessed. As a partial offset, however, the companies were allowed a discount of 8.5 per cent for 1964 off the posted price of each grade of oil; for 1965 and 1966 they were offered a discount of 7.5 and 6.5 per cent respectively. These discounts had undoubtedly diminished the revenues of the government. So the agreement which was meant to boost the government revenues did in fact work in favour of the companies. It was for this major reason that the agreement failed to be ratified when it was submitted for discussion in the National Assembly in Jan. 1965 (see, Kuwait National Assembly Proceedings 23 Jan. 1965).

[19] Unlike the case in some other oil-producing countries, crude oil production in Kuwait is associated with massive production of gas. In 1970 total gas production in Kuwait from all oil fields approximated 10 million tons. Until this time it has been found possible to use only 20 per cent of this gas for power generation, water distillation, refinery uses, and re-injection into oil fields to maintain reservoir pressure. What was left then about 8 million tons was flared off. This was valued at 180 million dollars annually. On several occasions the National Assembly pleaded with the government to put pressure on the oil companies to utilize this gas. The oil companies, however, were reluctant to do so on the ground that the operation costs were high. It was in January 1971 that the oil companies changed their position with regard to gas utilization. In an agreement reached with the government they consented to a gas project which involved the construction of extensive facilities to utilize the gas associated with crude oil output for the production of liquefied natural gas and such derivatives as propane and butane. The government was obliged, according to the agreement, to shoulder the costs of 50 per cent of the gas project. The agreement was exposed to bitter criticism in the National Assembly when it was submitted for discussion in March 1971. The oil companies were attacked for their contradictory stands vis-à-vis gas; for previously they had alleged that gas could not be utilized, owing to the expense, while the agreement indicated otherwise. The agreement in itself gave more benefits to the oil companies than to the government. The Assembly

participation agreement,[20] the nationalization of oil[21], and finally the Santa Fe deal.[22] The

members were wondering why the government did not assume all responsibility for gas utilization and so in turn reap the benefits alone. Despite the reservations expressed, it was finally ratified, (see: (i) Al-Esbou' El Arabi, 5 July 1972 (Lebanon Daily Newspaper), (ii) Al Hadaf (The Aim), 8 March 1971, (Kuwait Weekly Newspaper), (iii) Mir'at Al Umma (National Mirror), 28 June 1972.)

[20] In Jan. 1973, in common with several other Middle East countries, the Kuwait government signed a participation agreement with the country's main oil-producing concern, the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), owned equally by British Petroleum (BP) and Gulf Oil. KOC produced over 90 per cent of Kuwait's oil output in 1972. The agreement would have given the government an initial 25 per cent share in KOC and a 51 per cent (controlling) interest by 1982. The agreement was referred to the National Assembly for ratification. The agreement was criticised on the ground that it would mortgage the country's economic future. When the government sensed that the agreement might fail short of ratification it announced its intention to renegotiate it. The negotiations for new participation terms started between the government and KOC in June 1973. An agreement was reached in Jan. 1974 for the acquisition by the government of a 60 per cent share, with the right to acquire the remaining 40 per cent by 1979. The newly negotiated agreement received wide support in the National Assembly. The agreement was praised on the ground that it gave more say to the government. The idea of nationalization of the oil industry - which was raised by the opposition faction - was dismissed due to the lack of trained local staff in the fields of oil production, marketing and distribution. It was on this understanding that the Assembly voted to accept the agreement, with retroactive effect from Jan. 1975. (see: (i) the Kuwait National Assembly Proceedings No. 292/B, 30-1-73, (ii) *Al Qabas*, 26 Nov. 1973 (Kuwait Daily Newspaper), (iii) *Al-Siyasa* (Politics), 18 Dec. 1973 (Kuwait Daily Newspaper, (iv) *Al-Talia* (The Vanguard), 19 Dec. 1973 (Kuwait Weekly Newspaper).

[21] The issue of nationalization was reactivated by the opposition in May 1975. In a proposal submitted to the Assembly, they called again for the nationalization of the oil industry, asserting that it was the only way to preserve this national strategic commodity. They maintained that though the participation Agreement had given the state a 60 per cent share of the KOC, nevertheless it did not secure much say on the board of directors. The oil companies remained in charge, a fact illustrated by their control of 76 per cent of the votes of the board of directors. Before the opposition proposal was submitted for discussion, the government in a surprise move introduced a bill calling for nationalization. This step took the Assembly by surprise since it was only a year after the ratification of the participation agreement. The government was probably motivated either by (1) the fact that it did not want the opposition to win the credit for such a proposal and (2) the fact that it must have realized by then that nationalization would not cause *any* setbacks, judging by the experiences of Iraq and Libya. As a result the Assembly voted unanimously in favour of nationalization. By taking that step, Kuwait became the first Arab Gulf country to nationalize its oil industry (see: *Al-Siyasa*, 1 May 1975).

[22] Santa Fe was a leading US oil drilling, exploration and services company with annual sales totalling $2 billion in 1980. The company was bought by the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) in a bid that cost $2.5 billion. It had been alleged that the KPC offered $51 per share for Santa Fe Stock, more than twice Santa Fe's quoted price on the New York Stock Exchange. In addition there was the allegation that during the takeover of Santa Fe, some people had been involved in 'insider trading', which indicated that there was an advance leak of information. The issue was brought to the notice of the National Assembly in 1985 by the member Dr Abdalla El Nafisi, who demanded a full investigation. As a result the oil minister was requested to make a full report about the deal. In a comprehensive report submitted to the Assembly, the oil minister disclosed that the issue of Santa Fe had been discussed first during the visit of the company's managing director to Kuwait in July 1981. The government idea first was to buy some of the company's shares. But this policy was changed when the Santa Fe director offered to sell the entire company if a reasonable price could be agreed to. As a result the government formed a committee comprising officials from the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and the Kuwait Investment Office in London to collect data regarding the activities and operations of Santa Fe. In addition, two reputable investment firms, Morgan Grenfell and Salomon Brothers, were asked to assess the deal. The view of the two firms was that the deal was economically sound and they assessed the market value of the share of Santa Fe stock according to New York Stock Exchange figures as falling within the range of 45 - 55 dollars. This information was useful to the special committee which was formed later including the oil minister, the finance minister, the director of Kuwait Trade and Foreign Investment Company, a Kuwait University lecturer, a financial

opposition members won credit for leading constructive debates over these issues which later culminated in the state undertaking the necessary measures aimed at preserving and safeguarding this strategic commodity. Despite this superb record as illustrated by the debates over the oil policy, the Assembly tended however, in the majority of cases, to abuse its authority of controlling the executive branch. This was apparent in the much too frequent use of such parliamentary devices as the interrogation of ministers and the passing of no-confidence motions. Some people were of the opinion that it was the irresponsible and rash behaviour of some members that later led to the dissolution of the Assembly. Whether this view is substantiated by concrete evidence or not will be seen when we examine the issue of the dissolution later.[23] The questioning of Cabinet ministers can lead to their impeachment, which the government usually avoids by resignations, reshuffles and dissolving the legislature. Since its inception in 1962, the National Assembly of Kuwait has questioned more than 30 ministers, forcing some to resign, but has never done so with a premier.

First National Assembly

Social Affairs and Labor Minister Abdullah Meshari Al-Roudhan--MP Mohammed Ahmad Al-Rshaid requested to grill the minister but later reached an agreement and withdrew his request.

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adviser from El Diwan El Amiri (Royal Cabinet) and some prominent businessmen to finalise the deal. On the basis of a recommendation by the committee, the government offered its bid of $51 a share for Santa Fe stock. This offer was accepted by the Santa Fe company. Accordingly the government paid $2.5 billion for the takeover of Santa Fe. With regard to the last allegation of the leak, the oil minister stated that the inquiries of the US Securities and Exchange Commission did confirm that there had been trading in the company shares by some people owing to information leaked to them by some employees from Santa Fe during the takeover discussion. He added that the S.E.C. issued a statement on 1 May 1985 denying charges against any member of the board of directors or the executive director or any employee in the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation. On the basis of what had been revealed, the Assembly decided to refer the matter to the Attorney General to conduct further inquiries. The Attorney General conducted the necessary investigations and issued the following: (1) No official in the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation had any connection with the leak that took place during the takeover. (2) No one in the KPC obtained any financial gains from the leak. (3) The leak did not affect the market value of Santa Fe stock. On the basis of these findings, the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation was acquitted of the charges made against it. (see: (i) *Al-Qabas,* 6 July 1985, (ii) *Al-Khaleej* (Gulf), 27 Jan. 1986 (United Arab Emirates Newspaper), (iii) *New York Wall Street Journal,* 2 Nov. 1981, (iv) *Al-Khaleej,* 6 Jan. 1986)

[23] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuwait_National_Assembly_No-Confidence_Votes.

Electricity and Water Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Sabah--MP Rashed Saleh Al-Tawhid discussed the grilling but no proposals were made and the National Assembly shifted to consider its agenda.

Second National Assembly

Justice Minister Khaled Al-Jassar--MPs Suleiman Al-Duwaikh, Hamad Al-Ayyar and Nasser Al-Osaimi discussed the grilling over two sessions and no further decision was taken. Some MPs requested formation of inquiry committee and this request was not approved and the session was adjourned.

Third National Assembly

Finance and Oil Minister Abdul Rahman Salem Al-Ateeqi--The minister was grilled by MP Khaled Mas'oud Al-Fuhaid but was not impeached.

Commerce and Industry Minister Khaled Suleiman Al-Adasani--MPs Ali Thnayyan Al-Ghanem, Sami Al-Mnayyis and Abdullah Al-Naibari grilled the minister. The minister survived the ensuing no-confidence vote.

Finance and Oil Minister Abdul Rahman Salem Al-Ateeqi--MPs Ahmad Al-Nafisi, Abdullah Al-Naibari and Salem Al-Marzouk grilled the minister. The minister survived the ensuing no-confidence vote.

Fifth National Assembly

Health Minister Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Awadi--MP Khalifa Talal Al-Jiri led the discussion in favor of grilling the minister. The minister declined to present data based on the secrecy of relations between physicians and patients and the issue was referred to the Constitutional Court, which ruled in favor of the minister. This was the first time a minister referred such an issue to the Constitutional Court.

Social Affairs and Labor Minister Hamad Issa Al-Rujaib--MPs Khaled Sultan Al-Issa, Meshari Al-Anjari and Khaled Al-Jumaiaan led the calls for a grilling. The grilling request was withdrawn due to security circumstances surrounding the aftermath of the 1983 bombings.

Electricity and Water Minister Khalaf Al-Khalaf--MP Ahmad Al-Tukahim grilled the minister and was satisfied enough by the minister's answers to withdraw the request for a no-confidence vote.

Sixth National Assembly

Justice and Legal Affairs Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Duaij Al-Sabah--MPs Mubarak Al-Duwaila, Dr. Ahmad Al-Rubei and Hamad Al-Jouaan requested a grilling and on May 7, 1985 the minister resigned two days before the grilling was to take place. This was the second ruling family minister to be grilled and resign.

Communications Minister Issa Al-Mazidi--MPs Mohammed Suleiman Al-Mirshid, Faisal Al-Sane, and Ahmad Baqer made the request.

Finance and Economy Minister Jassem Al-Khrafi--MP Nasser Al-Bannai made the request.

Oil and Industry Minister Sheikh Ali Al-Khalifa Al-Sabah--MPs Abdullah Al-Nafisi, Jassem Al-Qitami, and Meshari Al-Anjari grilled the minister and in response the Amir dissolved the National Assembly on July 3, 1986. This was the ruling family minister to be grilled.

Education and Higher Education Minister Dr. Hassan Al-Ibrahim--MPs Rashed Al-Hjailan, Ahmad Al-Shraiaan and Mubarak Al-Duwaila had their grilling of the minister listed on the agenda but the National Assembly was dissolved on July 3, 1986 and the grilling did not take place.

Seventh National Assembly

Education and Higher Education Minister Dr. Ahmad Al-Rubei--MP Mufarrej Nahar Al-Mutairi grilled the minister. The minister survived the vote of no confidence. This was the third elected minister to be grilled and first elected minister against whom a vote of no confidence motion was submitted.

Eighth National Assembly

Second Deputy Prime Minister/Finance Minister Nasser Al-Roudhan--MPs Sami Al-Mnayyis, Ahmad Al-Mlaifi and Meshari Al-Osaimi grilled the minister but failed to get the required number of signatories for the vote of no confidence motion. However, the minister resigned on November 15, 1997.

Information Minister Sheikh Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah--MPs Dr. Walid Al-Tabtabaei, Mohammed Al-Elaim and Dr. Fahd Al-Khanna grilled the minister but the cabinet resigned one day before the vote of no confidence was to take place. After the cabinet was reformed, the minister was reappointed to the cabinet as the oil minister and acting health minister. This was the first cabinet resignation and the fourth ruling family minister to be grilled.

Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammed Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, June 1998--MP Sayed Hussein Al-Qallaf grilled the minister on June 15, 1998. This was the fifth ruling family minister to be grilled.

Justice Minister/Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Minister Ahmad Al-Kulaib, May 1999--MP Abbas Al-Khdhari grilled the minister on May 4, 1999. Then 20 MPs submitted two votes of no confidence motions against the minister. Subsequently, the National Assembly was dissolved constitutionally. This was the first constitutional dissolution of the parliament. Al-Kulaib was the fourth elected minister to be grilled and second elected minister against whom a vote of no confidence motion was submitted. It was first time two votes of no confidence motions were submitted.

Ninth National Assembly

Electricity and Water Minister/State Minister for Housing Affairs Dr. Adel Al-Sabih--MPs Walid Al-Jiri, Musallam Al-Barrak and Marzouk Al-Hbaini grilled the minister. The minister survived the no confidence vote.

Minister Al-Hashel, January 2001--MP Sayid Al-Qallaf was to grill the minister on January 27, 2001. However, the cabinet resigned before the grilling could take place.

Justice Minister/Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Minister Ahmad Baqer, January 2002--MP Sayid Hussein Al-Qallaf grilled the minister on January 8, 2002. This was the fifth elected minister to be grilled and the second time the government sought interpretation of certain articles from the Constitutional Court.

Education and Higher Education Minister Dr. Musaed Al-Haroun, April 2002--MP Hassan Jowhar grilled the minister on April 2, 2002.

Finance Minister Dr. Yousef Al-Ibrahim, June 2002--MP Musallam Al-Barrak and Mubarak Al-Duwaila grilled the minister on June 24, 2002. The result of the vote of no confidence motion was in favor of the minister. However, the minister resigned on January 25, 2003.

Electricity and Water Minister/Social Affairs and Labor Minister Talal Al-Ayyar, December 2002--MP Sayid Hussein Al-Qallaf grilled minister on December 16, 2002. It was the sixth elected minister to be grilled.

Deputy Prime Minister/State Minister for Cabinet and National Assembly Affairs Mohammed Sharar, March 2003--MP Abdulla Al-Naibari grilled the minister on March 3, 2003 and the result of the no confidence motion was in favor of the minister.

Deputy Prime Minister/Defense Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, May 2003--MP Ahmad Nassar Al-Shraiaan was to grill the minister on May 12, 2003 bu the MP withdrew his request one day beforehand.

Tenth National Assembly

Finance Minister Mahmoud Al-Nuri, March 2004--MP Musallam Al-Barrak grilled the minister on March 8, 2004. The minister tendered his resignation last year after he narrowly survived the no-confidence vote.

Health Minister Mohammed Al-Jarallah, May 2004--MP Sayid Hussein Al-Qallaf was to grill the minister on May 3, 2004.

Prime Minister/State Minister for Cabinet Affairs/State Minister for National Affairs Mohammed Dhaifallah Sharar--MPs Ahmad Al-Mulaifi and Ali Al-Rashed were to grill the minister on December 6, 2004.

Information Minister Mohammed Abulhassan, January 2005--On May 23, 2004, MP Al-Tabtabaie threatened to grill minister Abulhassan over allowing the Star Academy television show into Kuwait. MPs Awad Barad, Walid Al-Tabtabaei and Faisal Al-Mislim were supposed to grill the minister on January 3, 2005, but 24 hours before the grilling the minister resigned. In February, Anas Al-Reshaid was appointed the new information minister.

Justice Minister Ahmad Baqer, January 2005--MP Jamal Al-Omar grilled the minister on January 10, 2005.

Health Minister Mohammed Al-Jarallah, April 2005--MP Daifallah Bouramiya) accused the minister of squandering public funds and grilled the him for twelve hours on April 4, 2005. On April 6, Al-Jarallah resigned rather than face the no-confidence vote.[24]

Prime Minister Shaykh Nasser Mohammed Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, May 2006--MPs Ahmad Al-Saadoun, Ahmad Al-Mulaifi, and Faisal Al-Muslim Al-Otaib sought to grill the Prime Minister. In response, the Amir dissolved the National Assembly on May 21, 2006.

Eleventh National Assembly

Information Minister Mohammed Al-San'ousi, December 2006--On December 17, 2006, Information Minister Mohammed al-Sanoussi resigned, a day before he was scheduled to

[24] http://www.arabtimesonline.com/arabtimes/kuwait/Viewdet.asp?ID=8020&cat=a

be grilled by MP Faisal Al-Muslim Al-Otaib over allegations that he tried to restrict satellite TV stations during this year's legislative elections.

Al-Sanoussi denied he curbed the private TV channels, saying that he only asked them to apply for licenses. In Kuwait, all publications and broadcasting media have to be licensed. Several privately owned satellite stations, operated from abroad, appeared in Kuwait before the June elections, broadcasting interviews with opposition figures and covering the campaign. Most subsequently went off the air.

Faisal Al-Muslim Al-Otaib led the campaign against Al-Sanoussi, claiming that al-Sanoussi wrote to the Interior Ministry, asking it to find out who owned the new TV stations so that this "sensitive and dangerous" situation could be dealt with. In the written request to question Al-Sanoussi, Al-Muslim said, "What the information minister did was against the principles of freedom, and against the constitution that guarantees freedom of speech, expression and publication." Al-Muslim also accused the minister of failing to suppress publications that were anti-Islamic and promoting vice.

Health Minister Health Minister Shaykh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad, February 2007--MPs Waleed Al-Tabtabaie, Jamaan Al-Hirbish, and Ahmad Al-Shihoumi grilled the minister in February 2007, questioning him about allegations of favoritism, deteriorating health services offered by state hospitals, and wasting public money by sending people for treatment abroad at the country's expense when they could be treated at home. The minister defended himself against accusations of mismanagement and incompetence, acknowledging he made mistakes and has asked the prosecutor general to investigate. But lawmakers were unconvinced and decided he should face a vote of no confidence. The cabinet then resigned on March 4, one day before the vote of no confidence was to take place.[25]

Oil Minister Sheik Ali Al Jarrah Al Sabah, June 2007--MPs Musallam Al-Barrak, Abdulla Al-Roumi, and Adel Al-Saraawi grilled the minister, who then resigned before a no-confidence vote could be held.

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[25] http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/02/19/africa/ME-GEN-Kuwait-Health-Minister.php

Health Minister Maasuma Al-Mubarak, August 2007--On August 25, 2007, Faisal Al-Muslim Al-Otaib and Islamist MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaie submitted to Speaker Jassem Al-Kharafi a motion to grill Health Minister Maasouma Al-Mubarak following the August 23rd Jahra Hospital fire which led to the death of two elderly patients. However, the minister resigned before she could be grilled.

The first angle of the grilling accused Dr Maasouma of committing violations in the Foreign Medical Treatment Department and toying with ministerial law 2007/25 issued by the minister after assuming office. Indicating according to the law only those patients suffering from diseases for which treatment is not available in Kuwait can be sent for treatment abroad according to the recommendation of a specialized panel of doctors and the physicians in charge of the patient, the MPs said in their grilling motion "as per the law the Health Minister and undersecretaries of health cannot interfere in the decision. However, this law was never implemented and was repeatedly violated under the minister's supervision."

Finance Minister Bader Al-Humaidhi, October 2007--MP Dhaifallah Bouramya grilled the minister on October 22, 2007.

Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Minister/Justice Minister Dr. Abdulla Al-Ma'touq, October 2007--MPs Walid Al-Tabtabaei and Ali Al-Omair submitted their request to grill the minister on October 22, 2007.

Education and Higher Education Minister Nouria al-Subeih, January 2008--MPs Saad Al-Shraye grilled the minister on January 8, 2008. On January 22, 2008, the parliament voted 27-19, with two abstentions, against the impeachment of Education Minister Nouria al-Subeih.

Subeih had to defend herself against allegations that she had attempted to deceive the nation when she denied a press report that three male students had been sexually assaulted by an Asian worker at a state school. She explained she had been misinformed and issued an apology.

Islamist lawmaker Saad al-Shreih also accused Subeih of not showing enough respect for Islam when she did not punish a 14-year-old girl who had allegedly drawn a cross on her religion text book and scribbled notes on it that she hated Islam. The minister told the house there was no evidence the girl had actually done that and so she was just referred to counseling. Shreih, however, still managed to gather the requisite signatures of ten lawmakers to force the no-confidence vote.

In the lead-up to the vote, MPs Ali Al-Deqbasi, Musallam Al-Barrak, Saleh Ashour and Hussein Muzyed spoke against the minister and MPs Ali Al-Rashed, Mohammad Al-Saqer, Khalaf Al-Enezi and Adel Al-Saraawi spoke in her defense.

Twelfth National Assembly

Prime Minister Nasser, November 2008--MPs Walid Al-Tabtabei, Abdulla Al-Barghash and Mohammed Hayef Al-Mutairi submitted a request on November 18, 2008, to grill the Prime Minister based on overriding security records, absence of the State's prestige, and government confusion in running the affairs of the state and increase in rates of financial and administrative corruption. In response, the cabinet resigned in protest.

Prime Minister Nasser, February 2009--In February 2009, the ICM announced its intentions to grill PM Nasser. On February 5, 2009, Al-Qabas quoted MP Ashour as saying the he suspected that the plan to grill Prime Minister Nasser is a plot between the cabinet and the ICM. At the same time, MP Al-Tabtabaei advised the Salafi MPs to support ICM's grilling.

The other institution apart from the Assembly which witnessed extensive political transformation was the cabinet. Executive power was no longer the sole domain of the ruling family. New forces were mobilized to share power with the monarchy, namely the business oligarchy and the new middle class.[26] This was apparent in the cabinets which followed independence. To the first cabinet three merchants were appointed as against twelve members of the ruling family. In the second, which was formed in January 1963,

[26] Al-Marayati, *op. cit.*,p.288

they increased to five as against eleven members of the ruling family. The additional portfolios for the new elements encompassed ports, customs and that of the minister of cabinet affairs. In the next cabinet, formed in December, 1964, the number of recruits drawn from the business oligarchy increased to ten as against five members of the ruling family. This cabinet, however, had been challenged by some Assembly members on the grounds that its composition violated the constitutional provision against conflict of interests.[27] The members alleged that six ministers of the cabinet were involved in business enterprises and were thus disqualified to serve, in accordance with Article 131 of the constitution. So as to disrupt the process of oath-taking by the new ministers, twenty-one deputies of the Assembly walked out of the meeting scheduled for the purpose. This deprived the Assembly of its quorum and apparently led to the resignation of the cabinet. The incident was analogous to the parliamentary vote of no-confidence which the constitution does not approve. The crisis was contained by the Emir's move to give concessions to the opposition. The six businessmen who were alleged to the disqualified were replaced in the new cabinet formed in January 1965. Those who were sworn in instead were some representatives of the new middle class who now entered the cabinet for the first time. By yielding to the pressure of the opposition, the Emir was making it possible for the Assembly eventually to share control with him over the cabinet.[28] The recruitment of the new forces reached its highest level in the September 1976 and February 1978 cabinets when they represented over 60 per cent of the total membership. This was a further indication of the significant political change affecting the cabinet.

The Kuwait National Assembly has been dissolved five times in its political history.[29] In August 1976, the reasons for dissolution were given as follows according to the Amiri decree. The Emir of Kuwait has the power to dissolve the assembly and call for new elections within two months. On two such occasions, the assembly was dissolved unconstitutionally, and no new elections were held within the legally required period. The Emir of Kuwait in such cases ruled by decree. The first case was in 1976 and lasted until

[27] J.M. Landau, *op. cit.*
[28] Al-Najar, *op. cit.*, p.69.
[29] *Kuwait Al-Yaum* (Kuwait Today), 30 Aug. 1976 (The Official Gazette). Proceeding No. 1097.

1981. The other case lasted from 1986 until 1992. On three other occasions, the Emir dissolved the Assembly and held new elections immediately afterward. This happened in 1999, in 2006, and most recently in March 2008. First, that the Assembly failed to decide on a number of legislative proposals owing to the slow and complicated parliamentary procedures; this resulted in the failure of hundreds of parliamentary bills, the majority of which concerned crucial issues dealing with the livelihood of the individual citizens. Second, that the Assembly had wasted most of its time in unnecessary debates and that the members often made unfounded allegations against ministers. Third, that there was a lack of co-operation between the Assembly and the cabinet. And, finally, that the critical conditions within which the Arab countries were struggling to survive at that time - in particular, the Gulf countries - dictated swift and prompt action to preserve the state's security. The 2006 dissolution was brought by what is locally known as the Kuwaiti Orange Movement, when Kuwaitis held mass protests and demonstrations to demand that electoral districts be reduced in number from twenty-five to five.

A prominent Kuwaiti scholar, Dr Adil Tabtabaee, challenged the view that the National Assembly was unable to discharge its legislative functions effectively and that most of its legislative proposals were obstructed. In his book, *The Legislative Authority in the Arabian Gulf Countries*, Dr Tabatabaee argued otherwise, claiming that the Kuwaiti National Assembly had performed its legislative functions superbly.[30] He pointed out that between 1963 and 1976, the Assembly had enacted 584 laws. This was in comparison with the 458 laws which were promulgated by the government after the dissolution from 1976 to 1981. Dr Tabatabaee maintained that even during the fourth legislative session, which did not extend more than two years owing to the dissolution, its achievement was considerable, given (1) its enactment of 60 laws, (2) the convening of 666 sessions and (3) the submission of 202 reports by the Assembly's various committees. This was in addition to the 226 questions which were addressed by the members, with the government responding to 213 of them. To Tabtabaee this represented a fine record of legislative accomplishment. This comparison based on figures only is misleading for two

[30] Adil Tabtabaee. (1985). *The Legislative Authority in Arabian Gulf Countries*. Arabian Peninsula and Gulf Studies, Publication Series, p.341.

reasons: first, the two periods (1963-76) and (1976-81) are different in length. Secondly, the circumstances are not parallel in terms of their pressures and challenges. The first period witnessed the establishment of the state apparatus, the launching of the socio-economic developmental plans and the nationalization of the oil industry. Hence one would assume the passing of more laws during this period compared to the other. The claim that the Arab countries were threatened by critical circumstances and that there was a pressing need to preserve state security was mainly associated with the civil war in Lebanon.[31] It was widely believed that the liberal democratic atmosphere in Lebanon, apparent in the freedom of expression, press and association, had been mainly responsible for the civil strife which has bedevilled that country after 1975. As Kuwait was experimenting in the same way with parliamentary democracy and a relatively free press, it was feared that the unhappy Lebanese experiences would be repeated here. It was believed that the uncontrolled or rather misguided freedom of expression in the National Assembly would cause more fragmentation in the society and could ultimately lead to total political anarchy and collapse. Misgivings over these matters were expressed by the Crown Prince and Prime Minister in a statement he gave after the dissolution of the Assembly: The freedom of press has no value if it not been performed with a sense of responsibility. . . . The press deserves freedom if it proves capable of assuming responsibility. . . . By responsibility we mean working for the national interest, promoting love and solidarity in the society, and preserving the pride and dignity of others and avoiding acts of blackmail. . . . The political, economical and social conditions of a beloved sister country (Lebanon) did necessitate the adoption of a democratic system. But this political system has been abused as it has been utilized by the various political factions to facilitate foreign intervention. The end result was a catastrophe: a civil war which wrecked the entire political system. There were attempts by some forces to transfer this conflict to Kuwait - by making use of the democratic atmosphere here - and in turn to bedevil this peaceful country as they did that sister state .. .[32]

[31] Al-Najar, *op. cit.*, p.87.
[32] Tabtabaee, *op. cit.*, p.345.

The royal decree, apart from dissolving the National Assembly and delegating its powers to the Amir and the council of Ministers, stipulated the following: (a) suspension of provisions 56-F3,107,174and 181 of the Kuwait constitution, (b) the issuance of laws through Amiri decrees (c) formation of a committee of experts and experienced people to study the possibility of amending the constitution, so as to correct alleged malpractice associated with the previous parliamentary experiment; the committee would have to conclude this assignment in a period not exceeding six months, and its recommendations would have to be submitted to the Amir after the approval of the council of ministers; the ratification of the constitutional amendments would be conducted either through a referendum or by a new National Assembly which should convene not later than 1980.[33]

This committee was not formed until February 10, 1980. In a move which was interpreted as a first step towards the restoration of parliamentary democracy, the monarchy issued a decree appointing a 35-man committee and assigned to it the mission of amending the constitution.[34] The committee held its first meeting on 19 February 1980, and it was attended by the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Sheikh Saad Al Abdulla El Sabah. The Crown Prince delivered a speech in which he requested the members to assess the former parliamentary experiment, for the purpose of singling out its main deficiencies and shortcomings and of proposing remedies. He pointed out that some of the parliamentary shortcomings were associated with some of the constitutional provisions. For this reason he urged the committee to consider the possibility of amending these constitutional provisions. The committee was able to conclude this mission within four months. In June 1980 it submitted a proposal for amending 17 constitutional provisions.[35] The Amir issued a decree calling for the convening of the National Assembly by not later than February 1981, so as to ratify these constitutional amendments.

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[33] 'The Democratic Experience in Kuwait', a report compiled by the Kuwait News Agency (Feb. 1981).
Art.56 stipulates that some of the government appointed ministers should be from the members of the National Assembly.
Art.107 declares that in case the National Assembly is dissolved, an election for a new Assembly should be made during a period not exceeding two months from the date of dissolution.
Art. 174 concerns the procedure of amending the constitution.
Art. 181 stipulates that no constitutional provision shall be suspended unless during times of emergency.
[34] *Al-Wattan* (The Homeland), 9 February 1981, (Kuwait Daily Newspaper).
[35] *Ibid.*

On 8 September 1980, preparations were made for the election of the new Assembly. The first measure undertaken was the amendment of the 1962 electoral law. The law originally divided Kuwait into ten constituencies with five deputies representing each.[36] The new amendment divided Kuwait instead into twenty-five constituencies, with two deputies representing each. The justification made by the government for altering the law was that the demographic structure of the country had changed greatly, as was clear with the opening of new residential areas as well as the shrinking of other areas. The redistricting, however, seemed to have had a negative electoral impact, as the numbers of electors of 1981 election dropped dramatically compared to that of 1975. This is judged from the figures, respectively 41, 1953 and 52,993. The fifth (5th) Assembly was convened on the 9th of March 1981.[37] One of its main tasks was to debate the constitutional amendment issue referred to above. This issue generated very heated discussion among members.[38] One group of members interpreted the proposal of amending the constitution as a step towards restricting democracy and denying the Assembly its legislative and supervisory powers. On this basis they refused on principle to discuss the issue of constitutional amendments. Another Assembly faction supported the proposal on the grounds that the critical conditions which the country was living at that time necessitated many constitutional amendments. As a compromise, ten deputies presented a motion asking for the submission of the proposal to the Assembly Legislative Committee to study the issue in much greater detail and report back to the Assembly. This motion was challenged by the government on the ground that it conflicted with the constitutional provision which stipulated that the Amir and one third of the Assembly members had the right to propose a constitutional amendment.[39] By referring the proposal to the Legislative Committee, the government argued, the Assembly would be denied the right to decide on such a fundamental issue. It was agreed finally to take a vote on the motion and the result was that 26 members supported it while 34, including ministers

[36] A. Al-Assiri and K. Al-Manoufi, *op. cit.*, p.98.
[37] *Al-Qabas*, 18 Oct. 1984.
[38] *Al-Anba'* (The News), 27 Nov. 1984 (Kuwait Daily Newspaper).
[39] *Al-Watan*, 1 Dec. 1982.

who were members by virtue of their portfolios stood against. Hence, with the defeat of the motion, the Assembly opened the debate on the constitutional issue.

In the deliberations the members who stood previously against the constitutional amendment re-emphasised their stand. A well known member from this group was Ahmed El Sadoun, who urged the Assembly deputies to stand firm against the scheme of amending the constitution.[40] In his view endorsement of these constitutional amendments would lead to the suppression of democratic rights as well as to an encroachment on the powers of the Assembly. He specified the most critical constitutional amendments as article 50, which would deprive the Assembly of its powers; article 65, which would oblige the Assembly either to give priority to a government decree submitted within a period of thirty days or otherwise letting it become law; and finally article 69, which would give the government the right to extend a state of emergency even after the end of the conditions which necessitated it. The opposition was able to mobilize public opinion against the constitutional amendments. The press in particular waged a vigorous campaign against the proposals. This opposition eventually persuaded the majority who had supported the scheme earlier to change their positions.[41] The turning point was reached when 18 Assembly members presented a petition to the Ruler requesting withdrawal of the constitutional amendment proposal. The latter acquiesced in this demand.[42]

Apart from the constitutional amendment controversy, there were other issues which dominated the deliberations of the Assembly. Among these were the gigantic crash of the unofficial stock market, the Souk al-Manakh, and the publications law. Like the amendment issue, these two matters occasioned very heated discussions in the Assembly and sometimes the political atmosphere was so tense that there were fears that dissolution might ensue.[43] Despite these stormy sessions, the 5th Assembly was able to complete its four-year term of office.

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[40] *Ibid.*
[41] *Al-Qabas*, 25 Dec. 1984.
[42] *Al-Watan*, 14 Dec. 1982.
[43] *Al-Watan*, 29 Oct. 1984.

The real controversy, however, arose in the Assembly immediately following its election in February 1985, the Assembly collided with the government over the case of the justice minister's alleged improper use of government funds (i.e. Small Investors Relief Fund) during the Souk Al-Manakh crisis.[44] During the election campaign there had been vague allegations that the minister, a member of the ruling family, had reaped some personal financial gains during the crisis. At the beginning of April 1985, a few details began to appear in the press, with an accuracy that can only have come from a leak.[45] A question was tabled in the Assembly on April 12, and it was followed by the opposition organizing a motion of no confidence in the minister, scheduled for May 7. Support for it became so widespread that the minister submitted his resignation in advance, on May 5, which was promptly accepted by the Ruler.[46]

The confrontation between the Assembly and the government continued even after the resignation of the justice minister. The Assembly fought three battles on financial issues.[47] The financial sector was producing a continual crop of political issues, which were being fought with increasing bitterness. At the end of March 1986 the Assembly invoked its right to appoint one of its deputies as a special investigator to examine internal documents at the Central Bank. The government, sensing encroachment on its executive authority over all para-state organizations, refused, and passed the matter to the constitutional court. In mid-April the Fadhala committee, which was set up in July 1985 to investigate details of a K.D. 150-million loan granted by the Commercial Banks to the Industrial Bank of Kuwait, submitted a final report which was emasculated because of the government's refusal to cooperate, and the matter was again referred to the constitutional court. At the end of April a storm was raised over allegations from the State Audit Bureau of mismanagement and misappropriation of the Fund for the Relief of Small

[44] *Al-Watan*, 17 April 1985.
[45] *Ibid.*
[46] *Al-Siyasa*, 7 May 1985.
[47] *Al-Mujtamal*, 2 May 1986 (Kuwait Weekly Magazine).

Investors. This had already been a contentious issue, since it was in connection with the same issue that the justice minister had been forced to resign in May 1985.[48]

Another manifestation of confrontation developed in the ministry of education. This ministry had been the focus of a battle with the Muslim fundamentalist deputies. This group was particularly concerned about the reformist approach of the minister, Hassan Ali Al-Ibrahim, in a ministry which had long been their stronghold.[49] When they objected to a specific set of reforms, he tendered his resignation on May 11, 1986. He then withdrew it nine days later, after the government made it clear that his reform programme would be implemented regardless. The State Audit Bureau's report which alleged mismanagement of the country's reserves (referred to above) caused a fierce reaction in the Assembly. In a special Assembly session which was convened to debate the report, the minister of finance, was asked to give an explanation of the issues involved.[50] In his reply the minister stated that he was not responsible for the violations committed with regard to the Fund for the Relief of Small Investors. He maintained that such violations took place during the tenure of the previous finance minister, who is currently the oil minister. Even by involving the oil minister, the finance minister was not able to clear himself from the charges made against him.[51] The Assembly members held him at least partly responsible for the violations made since he had known that there was a misappropriation of the funds but failed to report it. For this reason he and the oil minister were severely reprimanded by the Assembly.

Apart from the finance and oil ministers, two other ministers were exposed to severe criticism. The minister of communications and public works was in the firing line for allegedly allowing some prominent citizens to run up huge unpaid telephone bills, while the education minister continued to be under pressure after his abortive resignation in May 1986. With specific questions tabled against the ministers of oil, finance, communications and education, and the press openly discussing the prospects for votes of

[48] *Al-Tali'a,* 26 April 1986.
[49] Al-Mujtama'. *Op. Cit.*
[50] Al-Tali'a, *Op. Cit.*
[51] *Ibid.*

no confidence, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister submitted the resignation of his government on July 1, because of the impossibility of cooperation between the (cabinet) and the Assembly.[52] This clearly delighted significant elements in the National Assembly, who offered a series of possible deals whereby questions would be dropped if the ministers were dropped from the cabinet. But the stakes were in fact far higher. Alarmed by a bombing attack on oil facilities at Ahmadi[53] and the local reaction to it, the Amir was forced to abide by an earlier agreement he had made with the Prime Minister in March 1986 to dissolve the Assembly in case of further attacks on the government. When the Amir dissolved the Assembly on July 3, he upheld his belief in the democratic process but argued that the dust of the dispute obscured the sun of truth.[54] He asserted that he had waited a long time hoping that the two bodies would settle their differences by discussion, but that unfortunately did not materialise.[55] He added that he had seen the picture of democracy shaken and its application crumble, pulling down with it social values and hence paving the way for the disintegration of the Kuwait society.[56] In addition to its internal problems, he concluded, Kuwait faced external threats, a situation requiring a united front.

The Amir accepted the resignation of the cabinet, asked the prime minister to form a new government, indefinitely suspended the Assembly, and amended the publications law No. 3/1961 in order to arm the minister of information with sweeping new censorship powers. The press curbs were almost identical to a government press bill which was deferred by the Nation Assembly after acrid debate at the end of March 1986.

The dissolution of the Assembly was welcomed by all groups except the progressive opposition. In the business community the dissolution was greeted with genuine pleasure, as the Assembly had provided the principal obstacle to the injection of fresh cash into the

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[52] *Al-Yaqza* (The Awakening), 11 Nov. 1986 (Kuwait Weekly Newspaper).
[53] On 17 June 1986 four separate 3-5 kg bombs exploded simultaneously under a Kuwait Petroleum Company crude oil pipeline at Ahmadi, together with 12-15 kg explosives at an oil depot in northern Ahmadi. They caused serious fires and the destruction of two tanks, but only interrupted the flow of oil exports for a few hours. Statements by senior government officials quickly pointed the fingers of blame at Iran, which responded characteristically on June 22 by blaming Iraqi agents.
[54] *Al-Siyasa*, 4 July 1986.
[55] *Al-Ra'id*, 10 July 1986 (Kuwait Weekly magazine).
[56] *Al-Risala*, 4 July 1986 (Kuwait Weekly newspaper).

local economy. Among the Kuwaiti middle classes, especially in the civil service, the dissolution was also welcomed as the only practical way out of the impasse, which was blamed on overambitious deputies. The Islamic opposition took the news very quietly indeed. For this they were duly rewarded by the dropping of the education minister, whose anti-Islamic reforms had provided the focus for their complaints over the previous period, when the new cabinet was announced. The only group which was critical of the dissolution was the progressive caucus.

During the 1950s, initiatives for holding elections came from the ruler, the merchant families, and the emerging political grouping of younger, educated Kuwaitis, but these were not successful. However, these moves, combined with the vibrant press, the traditional openness of Kuwaiti society, as well as the major political changes elsewhere in the Arab world (namely, independence of most countries and the superpowers' rivalry for regional supremacy), spurred efforts toward democratic reforms. This reached its peak with Kuwait's independence on 19 June 1961. The process was further speeded along by Iraq's claim of sovereignty over Kuwait, leading to the Kuwaiti crisis of 1961,[57] and culminating in Kuwait's decision to become a constitutional monarchy.[58] The newly independent state would have an elected legislature, a Constitution, and full separation of powers. A Constituent Assembly was elected in early 1962, with the full backing of Amir 'Abdallah al-Salim Al Sabah (1950-1965), who is widely respected in Kuwait and considered to be the father of the Constitution.[59] Consequently, the first parliamentary election was held in 1963. The elections of July 1999 would be the ninth in the 38 years of Kuwaiti Parliamentary experience. The details of the deliberations in the Constitution Committee of the Constituent Assembly were revealing. The deliberations took the form of negotiations between the elected members on one hand, and a representative of the

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[57] For more details of the Kuwaiti crisis of 1961 see Martha Docas. (1973). *Azmat al-Kuwayt (The Kuwait Crisis)*, Beirut: Al-Nahar Press; and Benjamin Shwadran. (1966). "Kuwait Incident," *Middle East Affairs* Vol. 13, January-February.

[58] Many laws were issued to regulate and institutionalize what had formerly been the absolute powers of the ruling family. Thus Parliament plays a role in the appointment of the Crown Prince. and his removal if he proves to be unfit (Law No. 4/1964, issued 30 January 1964). Law No. 12/78 specifies the Amir's own budget. Laws can be found in *Majmu'a al-Qawanin al-kuwaitiyya*. (1978). (Collection of Kuwaiti Laws). Kuwait: Idarat al-Fatwa wa al-Tashri'a.

[59] Suhail Shuhaiber. (1981). "Political Development in Kuwait, Continuity and Change in an Independent Arab Gulf State" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation: Oxford University,).

ruling family (the current Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Sa'd al-'Abdallah Al Sabah) on the other, over the amount of power that the ruling family would concede to the elected assembly. The details of the deliberations, which were made public only recently, leave no doubt that the participants were aware of the fact that they were about to institutionalize the relationship between the ruling family and the "citizens", a term replacing the traditional "subjects". These constitutional deliberations could themselves be the subject of a study on political transformation in a traditional society.[60] The new Parliament faced its first crisis in 1964, when it brought down the newly formed government; the Amir refused a request by his brother the Prime Minister to dissolve Parliament. But Amir 'Abdallah, who had strongly supported the Constitution and Parliament, died in November 1965. He had kept in check those members of the ruling family opposed to parliamentary democracy, and his death removed those checks. The dissolution of the elected Municipal Council in May 1966,[61] and the rigging of the parliamentary elections of 25 January 1967, were two signs of this. The government's behavior became part of a predictable cycle: government would interfere in one way or another with every other Parliament. That Parliament elected in 1963 completed its term, whereas the one which followed in 1967 was chosen through election rigging.[62] The third parliamentary session of 1971 completed its term, but the fourth was dissolved unconstitutionally in its second year, in 1976. The system continued for four years without a Parliament, until the government changed the electoral boundaries and increased the number of constituencies, and held a new election for the fifth Parliament in 1981. That Parliament completed its four year term, while the sixth, elected in 1985, was dissolved in 1986. The country then continued without a Parliament until after the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1990-91. After Kuwait was liberated, a new election for the seventh Parliament was held 5 October 1992. That Parliament completed its term, but true to the paradigm, the eighth Parliament was dissolved, this time constitutionally, on 3

[60] Majalat al-Huquq. (1999). (Kuwait University) Special Edition, November.
[61] The Municipal Council was dissolved in May 1966 to pave the way for uncontrolled spending on the Land Acquisition Policy, in what is normally known as the land purchase program. Ghanim Alnajjar. (1984). Decision-Making Process in the Kuwaiti Political System, Land Acquisition Policy as a Case Study, 1950-1980, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis: University of Exeter.
[62] Direct election rigging is not widely practiced in Kuwait. This occasion, 1967, was the first and the last time it was practiced.

May 1999. This alternation seemed more like a mathematical formula than a political process.

As noted, the elections of 3 July 1999 marked the ninth parliamentary elections since independence. The timing came as a surprise, in the midst of a political crisis, and left candidates with only 60 days to prepare their campaigns. The result was a very tense campaign in which strong attacks were aimed at the government. Candidates claimed that the government allocated a special fund to support loyal pro-government candidates. The government also was affected by these tensions: for the first time in Kuwaiti electoral history, the government took legal actions against four candidates. Two weeks after his decision to dissolve the Parliament, the Amir made another surprise move, by announcing his intention to grant full political rights to women, further inflaming an already tense campaign. Islamic groupings opposed the decision, denouncing it as anti-Islamic and unconstitutional. When preachers at Friday sermons opposed the decision, the government responded by suspending 26 of them. Supporters of the move held public rallies with more than 30 non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As a result, women's political rights became a central issue in the campaign.[63] The government also took action against so-called tribal primary elections. Tribal politics dominates in about half of the 25 electoral districts. Tribes, in at least six districts, had used internal primaries, to minimize the possibility of scattering tribal votes over weaker tribal candidates. The method proved useful, and hence flourished. From only two such primaries in 1975, the number rose to 15 in 1996. Tribes who controlled more than 15% share of votes in a district could consider holding a primary. Most tribal candidates who won primaries then won comfortably in the general elections. The government, for its part, had found the method favorable to its political ends, since tribal candidates had generally been loyal to the government. However, the tide shifted and some tribal candidates became critical of the government, while many tribesmen expressed opposition to the primaries as anti-democratic, mostly because of the unfair competition within the tribe itself. The general public mood turned against the continuation of tribal primaries. As a result, the 1996

[63] The new Parliament elected in 1999 subsequently rejected, by a narrow margin of two votes, the Amiri decree on women's voting, as well as other decrees issued during the period when Parliament was suspended.

Parliament issued a law banning primary elections in general, and tribal primaries in particular. With the confusion of a hasty election campaign, two tribes publicly announced their intentions to hold tribal primaries. The government, reluctant to move at first, eventually decided to take action against the organizers. At least 176 participants (including 21 candidates) were taken to court; 160 were acquitted and 16 were fined. This issue of tribal primaries became another major theme in the 1999 election campaign.[64] Although political parties are not legal in Kuwait, de facto political groupings put up candidates for the elections. They have not been legalized since independence in 1961. Nonetheless, the constitution itself does not explicitly prohibit parties. Candidates for election (e.g., to the National Assembly) stand in a personal capacity. In practice, however, several political groups act as de facto parties:

- The Islamic Constitutional Movement (Hadas)
- The National Democratic Alliance
- The National Islamic Alliance
- The Islamic Salafi Alliance
- The Popular Action Bloc
- The Justice and Peace Alliance

In 1999, there were six political groupings, with varying degrees of officially committed candidates. The two most apparent were the Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM), the local name of the Muslim Brothers, and the Kuwaiti Democratic Forum (KDF), an alliance of liberals, Arab nationalists, leftists, and independents. The ICM officially nominated four candidates and unofficially supported 13. The KDF nominated two candidates and unofficially supported one candidate. The other four groupings were the Islamic Popular Bloc (IPB), a Salafi Islamist group; the Salafi Movement (SM), a splinter group of IPB; the National Islamic Alliance (NIA), a Shi'i Islamist group; and the National Democratic Bloc (NDB), a liberal group based largely in the academic and business communities. None of these four groups officially nominated candidates, mostly for tactical reasons, but they made no secret of which candidates they supported. The IPB

[64] For the election results, see any of the five major Kuwaiti dailies (*Al-Rayy al-'Amm, al-Watan, al-Siyasa, al-Qabas, al-Anba'*) for 4 July 1999 and subsequent days.

and the SM each supported ten candidates, while the NIA and the NDB backed four each. All the groups won seats, with the ICM winning six, the KDF three, the IPB two, the SM one, the NIA two, and the NDB three. The main losers were the pro-government candidates, with 11 major incumbents losing what had been considered "safe", secured seats. The election results were a clear indication of public dissatisfaction with both the government and the previous Parliament. Only 48% of the incumbents were reelected. The government lost 11 of its valued supporters from the previous Parliament, and 11 of the new members were candidates who had lost in the 1996 elections. The government is likely to face challenges in dealing with such a Parliament. If we credit the notion that the government created the political crisis which led to the Parliament's dissolution, hoping to increase the number of its supporters in the legislature, then the calculation backfired.

The assembly is composed of different unofficial political factions in addition to independents:

* The Islamic bloc: Consisting mainly of Salafi and Hadas members. The Islamic bloc is the most influential bloc in the assembly with around 21 members elected in the 2008 national elections (17 in the 2006 election), although its loose organization made it less effective. Their chief goal is the complete return of the Shari'a law. Bills supported by the Islamic bloc include the elimination of co-education at the university level (passed in 1998).

* The Shaabi (Populist) bloc: A coalition of independents and other nationalist parties with a focus on lower- and middle-class issues. In 2006 national elections, they won around 10 seats of the parliament.

* The liberal bloc: With eight members elected in the 2006 elections. The liberal bloc supported the women's suffrage bill in 1999 and 2005.

In 2006 general election, a coalition of 29 candidates who were members of parliament was formed (which was increased to 36 members after the election) for supporting the 5 electoral districts bill.

ELECTION RESULTS

It can be difficult to summarize Kuwaiti election results. Political groups and parliamentary voting blocs exist, however, actual political parties are illegal. While it is possible to determine how well the members of formal political groups fare in elections, most candidates do not belong to one of the formal political groups. Some of these candidates may receive support from one of the formal political groups and others adopt a clear ideological position as Islamists, liberals, or leftists. Some candidates associate themselves with the government. Yet in a number of cases it is difficult to determine, and to classify, the ideological positions of candidates and deputies.[65]

In the 2003 elections the liberal/left Minbar al-Dimuqrati group lost the two seats it held in the 1999 parliament. The Salafis doubled their representation, to 6 seats. The Hadas lost several seats, winning only 2 in the 2003 elections. The Popular Bloc lost 4 of its 10 seats. Once elected, many deputies form voting blocs in the National Assembly. Following the 2003 elections, according to Al-Dustoor (a Kuwaiti newspaper published by the National Assembly, July 20, 2003) 16 deputies joined the Islamist bloc; 6 joined the Popular Bloc (a populist group that includes both bedouin and Shi'i deputies); 4 joined the liberal bloc.

ELECTION HISTORY

The earliest modern elections in Kuwait were held in 1921. Elections were held again in June and then in December of 1938 for a majlis al-tashri'i, or Legislative Council. The ruling family dissolved the second Council in 1939. Following independence in 1961 elections were held in 1962 to elect 20 members to the constitutional convention.

The 1962 constitution calls for elections to be held at a maximum interval of four years (or earlier if the Emir dissolves the parliament). Kuwait's first National Assembly was elected in 1963. Subsequent elections were held in 1967, 1971, and 1975. In 1976, however, the Emir issued a decree suspending the parliament. New elections were held in 1981 and again in 1985, but the Emir again suspended the parliament in 1986. Following

[65] Complete results for elections to the National Assembly, and elections to the assemblies of 1921 and 1938-39, can be found at the Kuwait Politics Database.

protests, the government held elections to an unconstitutional majlis al-watani in 1990, just before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Most Kuwaitis rejected this majlis: organized political groups, across the political spectrum, boycotted the elections and did not run candidates. Only a few deputies from previous parliaments ran for seats in the majlis al-watani, and most of these were from outlying Bedouin districts. Fulfilling a promise made during the Iraqi occupation, the Emir held new elections for the National Assembly in 1992. Elections were held again in 1996. On May 4, 1999, the Emir once again dissolved the National Assembly. This time, however, it was done through entirely constitutional means, and new elections were held on July 3, 1999. Parliamentary elections were next held on 5 July 2003. On May 21, 2006, the Emir dissolved the National Assembly through constitutional means.

The next elections were held on June 29, 2006. This was the first general election in which Kuwaiti women could vote. Over 340,000 Kuwaitis, including about 195,000 women, were eligible to vote for 253 candidates, including 28 women,[66] but the women candidates failed to win a single seat.[67] This was also the case at the election held on May 17, 2008. However, at the subsequent election, held on May 16, 2009, four women were elected to the National Assembly, for the first time in Kuwait's history.[68]

Kuwait has universal adult suffrage for Kuwaiti citizens who are 21 or older, with the exception of (1) those who currently serve in the armed forces and, (2) citizens who have been naturalized for fewer than 30 years.

The Explanatory Memorandum of the Constitution bars members of the ruling family of the Mubarak branch (the branch from which the Emir must descend) from running for election to the National Assembly, though the Memorandum does not explicitly prohibit these members of the ruling family from casting votes. It is not clear if the prohibition on

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[66] Hassan M. Fattah. (2006). "Kuwaiti Women Join the Voting After a Long Battle for Suffrage", *The New York Times*, June 30.

[67] IFES Country Profile Kuwait; Ismail Küpeli. (2006). *Kuwait: Frauen dürfen jetzt wählen. from: Direkte Aktion*, Nr. 177, Sept. / Okt., p.9-10

[68] "First Women Win Seats in Kuwait Parliament", May 18, 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/18/world/middleeast/18kuwait.html?ref=middleeast.

candidacies would be enforced.[69] Some members of the ruling family are found on the voter rolls, though prominent members of the family do not vote.

In 1996 naturalized citizens were given the right to vote, but only after they had been naturalized for at least 30 years. The franchise was expanded to include women on May 16, 2005, in a 35-23 vote with one abstention. Under pressure from Islamists, the right of women to run as candidates and to vote was made subject to Islamic Law: for example, men and women will vote in separate polling places. Most residents of Kuwait are not citizens and consequently do not have the right to vote. Kuwait's citizenship law, in theory, gives citizenship to those who descend, in the male line, from residents of Kuwait in 1920.

DISTRICTS AND VOTING PROCEDURES

Prior to 2006, Kuwait has been divided into 25 electoral districts, each of which elects two members to the National Assembly, for a total of 50 elected members (additional members sit as appointed members of the cabinet). Each voter could cast ballots for two candidates, though it is also possible to vote for only one candidate. In each district the candidates who win the largest and second largest number of votes earn seats in the National Assembly.

In 2006, the National Assembly passed legislation to divide Kuwait to 5 electoral districts only, which was a major issue in the preceding election campaign. The voter now can cast votes for 4 candidates and in each district the highest 10 candidates earn seats. It is hoped that this would make vote buying more difficult and decrease the importance of tribe, family and sect in elections. Elections in Kuwait are held for both the National Assembly (Majlis al-Umma) and for the Municipality.[70] Kuwait's 1962 constitution calls

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[69] *Al-Qabas*, May 31, 2006.

[70] Chronology of some of the important events in Kuwait. * June 19, 1961- The Independence of Kuwait.
* February 27, 1962- The Preliminary Assembly convened.
* November 11, 1962- The Constitution of Kuwait was signed by the Emir, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah after being passed unanimously in the Assembly.
* January 29, 1963- The First constitutionally elected Assembly convened.
* February 27, 1967- The second elected Assembly convened, allegedly by forged elections.
* August 29, 1976- The first, unconstitutional, dissolution of the Assembly by Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.
* July 3, 1981- The second, unconstitutional, dissolution of the Assembly by Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

for elections to the unicameral National Assembly at a maximum interval of four years. Elections are held earlier if the Emir exercises his constitutional power to dissolve the parliament.

DEMOCRACY, IMPARTIALITY AND GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE

Elections in Kuwait meet a relatively high standard of fairness. The government does not interfere in the counting of the ballots (the one exception was the election of 1967 in which the government manipulated the results in a few districts). The Kuwaiti media - with a number of Arabic language dailies - extensively cover campaigns. Candidates have ample opportunities to meet with voters. The very small size of districts makes electronic media less important in elections. Candidates enjoy a wide degree of freedom to take political stands, and the press extensively covers statements made by candidates.

In recent years Kuwaiti elections have been marred by persistent reports of vote buying. Both the government and wealthy candidates are accused of buying votes, and it is widely thought that the overall effect is to help pro-government candidates. In the 2003 elections several groups launched campaigns to discourage Kuwaitis from selling their votes. Some candidates emphasize their close ties to the government and promise that, if

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* May 4, 1999- Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah dissolved the National Assembly on the grounds of a political deadlock between the Government and the Assembly. This time he called for elections within the constitutional period of two months.

* November 23, 1999- The National Assembly rejects an amiri decree by Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to grant women's suffrage in the next elections.

* May 16, 2005- The National Assembly passes women's suffrage law after sevral attempts since the amiri decree of 1999.

* January 24, 2006- The National Assembly of Kuwait voted [3] ruling emir Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salim Al-Sabah out of office just moments before a letter of abdication was received from the emir. The Kuwait Cabinet nominated Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, prime minister, to take over as emir.

* January 29, 2006- Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was sworn in as the 15th emir of Kuwait, which was unanimously approved by the National Assembly.

* May 21, 2006- Amidst week long disputes over reform to decrease the number of electoral districts, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah dissolves the Assembly calling for new elections June 29th of 2006.

* March 17, 2008- Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad again dissolves the Assembly due to misuse of parliamentary powers by some members. He called for elections May 17, 2008.

* March 18, 2009 - Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad dissolves the Assembly calling for new elections in two months time. This happened immediately following some members' calls to "grill" (see Politics of Kuwait for a definition of grilling) the prime minister, after months of "grilling" and political deadlock. The government resigned on March the 17th.

* May 16, 2009 - The first women MPs were elected into the National Assembly. 4 women won in the 2009 election; Aseel al-Awadhi, Rola Dashti, Massouma al-Mubarak and Salwa al-Jassar.

elected, they will deliver government services to their constituents. In the parliament, these deputies are known as "service deputies." It is widely thought in Kuwait that the government promises the delivery of services to other deputies in exchange for votes on important issues.

Kuwait is divided into 6 governorates (muhafazah). The governorates are further subdivided into districts.

TABLE II: GOVERNORATES OF KUWAIT

Subdivision	**Capital**	**Area km²**	**Population Census of 2005**	**Created**
Al Ahmadi[1)]	Al Ahmadi	5 120	393 861	1946 from Al Asimah
Al Asimah (Al Kuwayt)[2)]	Al Kuwait	200	261 013	original Governorate
Al Farwaniyah	Al Farwaniyah	190	622 123	1988 from Al Asimah
Al Jahra[3)]	Al Jahra	12 130	272 373	1979 from Al Asimah
Hawalli	Hawalli District	84	487 514	original Governorate
Mubarak Al-Kabeer	Mubarak Al-Kabeer	94	176 519	Nov. 1999 from Hawalli
TOTAL		17 818	2 213 403	
[1)] The Neutral Zone was dissolved on Dec. 18, 1969, and the northern part with 2590 km² was added to Al Ahmadi (with small part in the northwest added to Al Jahra)				
[2)] including the islands of Failaka, Miskan, and Auhah				
[3)] including the islands of Warbah and Bubiyan				

TABLE III: DISTRICTS OF KUWAIT-Kuwait is divided into five districts.

District One	District Two	District Three	District Four	District Five
Bayan	Abdullah Al-Salem	Abraq Khaitan	Andalus	Abu Halifa
Bnied Al-Gar	Doha	Hadiya	Ardiyah	Ahmadi
Hawalli	Faiha	Keifan	Fardaws	Fahaheel
Mishref	Kuwait City (downtown)	Khaldiya	Farwaniyah	Fintas
Rumaithiya	Mansouriya	Rawdah	Jahra	Mahboula
Salmiya	Nuzha	South Khaitan	Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh	Mangaf
Salwa	Qadsia	Surra	Omariya	Qurain
Sharq	Shuwaikh	Udailiya	Rabiya	
Al-Jabriya	Shammiya		Sabah Al-Nasser	Riqqah
	Sulaibkhat			Sabah Al-Salem
				Sabahiyah
				Wafra
				Al-Zour

Kuwait was divided into ten districts in the National Assembly elections between 1963 and 1975. Each district elected five deputies to the Assembly. Before the 1981 elections the government redistricted Kuwait, creating the system of 25 districts. Following the redistricting, fewer Shi'ite candidates won seats in the Assembly. This was a deliberate result of the redistricting, and it followed the 1979 Revolution in Iran.

PRIMARIES

Tribal and sectorial primaries are illegal in Kuwait, though the prohibition is rarely enforced and in practice tribes (and in some districts, sects) do hold primaries. These primaries allow tribes to avoid splitting their votes among a number of different

candidates, thus helping tribes to ensure that their members vote for one or two candidates, making it more likely that these canddiates will win seats in the National Assembly. Many non-tribal Kuwaitis oppose these primaries on the grounds that it increases the importance of tribal affiliation and makes it more difficult for those who do not belong to tribes to win seats in predominantly tribal districts.

TABLE IV: SUMMARY OF THE 16 MAY 2009 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF KUWAIT ELECTION RESULTS[71]

POLITICAL COALITION GROUPS	Seats
Independents	21
Sunni Islamist	13
Liberals (Shia and Sunni)	7
Shia Islamist	6
Popular Bloc	3
Total (turnout 50 %)	**50**

An early parliamentary election was held in Kuwait on 16 May 2009,[72] the country's third in a three-year period.[73] The state run KUNA news agency said the turnout was only 38.3 per cent four hours before close, but voting picked up late in the evening. The ballot to elect 50 MPs was called after Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti emir,

[71] Kuwait Politics Database.
[72] "Stimulus decree comes in effect". Kuwait Times. 2009-04-07. http://www.kuwaittimes.net/read_news.php?newsid=Nzk5NDA5MjY1.
[73] "Kuwait votes for first female MPs". BBC News. 2009-05-17. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8053088.htm.

dissolved the parliament in March triggering the third election since 2006. Political infighting between elected MPs and the unelected cabinet chosen by the Al-Sabah family has led to three parliament dissolutions and five different cabinets in as many years. A total of 210 candidates, including 16 women, stood for a four-year parliamentary term, but analysts see little hope that the political deadlock will end, whatever the outcome. Around 385,000 people were eligible to vote, with female voters making up 54.3 per cent. Kuwait had voted on six occasions between 1991 and 2009.[74] The election was notable in that women were elected for the first time since Kuwait gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1961.

The Emir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah dissolved the National Assembly of Kuwait on 18 March 2009 over accusations of supposed abuse of democracy and threats to political stability. The government had resigned just two days before to evade questioning in parliament.[75] Suggested solutions to this recurring problem (government resignation) include the formation of a government without any members of the royal family (a so-called "popular government"), thus making the possibility of parliamentary questioning a reality, or appointing the crown prince as PM, which would make parliamentary questioning sufficiently unlikely so that it would not be a problem any more. 210 candidates attempted to win 50 seats. 16 were female.[76]

The results were announced on 17 May 2009. For the first time, Kuwait, which has no political parties, successfully elected female MPs. Four women will appear in parliament. Aseel al-Awadhi and Rola Dashti were victors in the third district; both received their education in the United States. Also winning were Massouma al-Mubarak and Salwa al-Jassar. Women's rights in Kuwait improved in 2005 when Kuwaiti females were allowed

[74] "Does Kuwait need a political revamp?". BBC News. 2009-03-21. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7954741.htm.

[75] http://www.themedialine.org/news/news_detail.asp?NewsID=24591; also see, "Kuwaiti government resigns again". BBC News. 2009-03-16. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7946232.htm.

[76] "Women win parliamentary seats for first time in Kuwait". CNN. 2009-05-17. http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/meast/05/17/kuwait.women.elections/.

to vote and to run for election to parliament for the first time in the nation's history. Reportedly, Sunni islamists lost ground, while liberals and independents gained seats.[77]

TABLE V: SUMMARY OF THE 17 MAY 2008 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF KUWAIT ELECTION RESULTS[78]

	YEARS		%
COALITION ALLIANCE	**2006**	**2008**	**change**
Islamic Bloc (Sunni) (incl. Hadas)	17	21	+4
Shia + Popular Action Bloc (opposition)	9	9	0
Liberals and allies	8	7	–1
Independents (pro-government strong families and tribal members)	16	13	-3
Total (turnout 80%)	**50**	**50**	—

An early parliamentary election was held in Kuwait on 17 May 2008 after the Emir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah dissolved the National Assembly of Kuwait on 19 March 2008 over constant clashes between the government and the elected MPs.[79] The last elections were held less than two years previously and saw a loose alliance of reformists and Islamists gain almost two thirds of the seats.[80] 361,685 Kuwaitis were eligible to vote, more than half of them women; 27 of the 275 candidates were women.[81] None of the female candidates won.[82]

New rules introduced for this election have changed the 25 constituencies electing two to five electing 10. This was a demand of the reformist Kuwaiti Orange Movement, which led mass demonstrations in 2006, who believed the change would impede vote buying electoral frauds.[83] A leading theme in the election was inflation, which hit a record high

[77] http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/18/world/middleeast/18kuwait.html?ref=middleeast
[78] BBCArabic.com, Al Jazeera English
[79] Emir von Kuwait setzt Neuwahlen an (International, NZZ Online)
[80] BBC NEWS | Middle East | Kuwait emir calls fresh elections
[81] *The Associated Press*, "Kuwaitis elect new parliament"; also *derStandard.at*
[82] Poll snub for Kuwait women, *Gulf Daily News*, 2008-05-19.
[83] Kuwaitis elect new parliament, *Associated Press*, 2008-05-17.

9.5% four months before the election. Many candidates in the election proposed increased governmental subsidies to be funded by oil profits.[84]

TABLE VI: SUMMARY OF THE 29 JUNE 2006 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF KUWAIT ELECTION RESULTS[85]

Results	Seats
Islamic Bloc (Sunni)	21
Popular Bloc	9
National Action Bloc (liberals)	7
Independents (mostly pro-government)	13
Total (turnout 80 %)	**50**

Kuwait held a national election on June 29, 2006. The voters selected the 50 members of the country's National Assembly. For the first time, universal suffrage was in force, and all Kuwaiti citizens at least 21 years of age were allowed to participate except for members of the armed forces. It is estimated that there are around 340,000 people eligible to vote in Kuwait. Although 57% of the eligible voters in Kuwait are women, in the final poll, only 35% of the total voters were women.[86]

The National Assembly of Kuwait, known as the Majlis Al-Umma ("House of the Nation") is the legislature of Kuwait. The current speaker of the Assembly is Jassem Al-Kharafi. The Emir unconstitutionally dissolved the National Assembly in 1986 and restored it after the Gulf War in 1992. The Emir has also constitutionally dissolved the

[84] Laessing, Ulf. (2008). "Price debate dominates Kuwait election campaign", *Reuters India*, 15. May.
[85] *Kuwait Politics Database.*
[86] 'Reformists sweep vote in Kuwait; women lose', *International Herald Tribune*

Assembly several times--meaning that he dissolved it but allowed for elections immediately afterward.

Until recently, suffrage was limited to male Kuwaiti citizens above the age of 21 whose ancestors had resided in Kuwait since 1920, and adult males who have been naturalized citizens for at least 20 years. On May 16, 2005, however, the Assembly passed a law in support of women's suffrage, allowing women to vote and run for office, as long as they adhere to Islamic law. The fifty-seat assembly is elected every four years. Currently there are five geographically distributed electoral districts.

TABLE VII: DISTRICT CENSUS OF 2005[87]

District	Area on Map	Registered Voters	Population
District One	Hawalli	66,641	487,514
District Two	Al Kuwait	41,365	261,013
District Three	Al Farwaniyah	58,674	622,123
District Four	Al Jahra	93,711	272,373
District Five	Mubarak Al-Kabeer & Al Ahmadi	101,294	570,380
TOTAL		361,685	2,213,403

Every eligible citizen is entitled to four votes, though he or she may choose to only cast one vote. The ten candidates with the most votes in each district win seats. Cabinet ministers (including the prime minister) are granted automatic membership in the Assembly, which increases the number of members in the assembly from fifty to sixty-six. The Cabinet ministers have the same rights as the elected MPs except that: 1) they do not participate in committees' work, and 2) they cannot vote when an interpolation leads to a "no-confidence" vote against one of the Cabinet members. The parliament building was designed by the famous Danish architect Jørn Utzon, who also designed the Sydney Opera House.

[87] Kuwait District Census of 2005.

OPERATIONAL VERSUS RADICAL CHALLENGES

This historical survey suggests that Kuwaiti democracy is in serious crisis. Since the first parliamentary elections, Parliament was absent in one form or another. This has been demonstrated by a number of challenges operating within the political system as well as outside it. These challenges are mainly responsible, for what could be seen, as a precarious democracy. The precarious nature of Kuwaiti democracy raises many questions. If one assumes that the ruling family is opposed to democracy, then why did it reinstate it after earlier interventions? With the major sources of power at the government's disposal, what type of social forces are able to pressure the government to restore democratic institutions? The question is not one of the absence of democracy in Kuwait (that is, after all, the norm in the region), but rather, why Kuwait has indeed had a democratic experience, however precarious. Which has the stronger impact on decision-making, vis-à-vis democracy, internal and local politics, or external factors? The challenges facing Kuwaiti democracy may be grouped under two major categories: structural challenges and political challenges. The structural challenges are all those factors hindering the efficacy of Kuwaiti democracy which are part of the legal structure of the system, either through a legal instrument (legislation or decree) or the Constitution. Political challenges are those factors stemming from the political process generally, which have a major influence on parliamentary democracy.

The challenges involve relations with Parliament and the principle of separation of powers. Political parties are not legal in Kuwait, but de facto parties are tolerated. The Constitution itself does not prohibit the formation of political parties. But the lack of legal parties recognized as such creates a situation in which there is an imbalance in Parliament's functions, between the government on one hand, and the elected members on the other. (Ministers of the government serve ex-officio as Members of Parliament.) Under the internal working rules of Parliament, only the government is allowed to speak and be represented as a united bloc; this makes the government the only de facto political party permitted to operate in Parliament.[88] Elected members are not allowed to function

[88] *Majlis al-Umma Al-La'iha al-Dukuiliya.* (1963). (National Assembly, Parliament: Internal Rules). Kuwait: Government Press.

collectively, or to have a single spokesman for a group of parliamentarians.[89] As a result the government enjoys a stronger position in lobbying for votes on key issues. The government ministers move among the elected members as a unified body; while elected members can speak only as individuals. There are no legally recognized groups inside the Parliament except the government. Although some are known to be affiliated with specific political groupings, this is not recognized procedurally under the rules of Parliament. On several occasions, politically-affiliated parliamentarians have voted against the position of their "party", because there is no official recognition of parties and thus no party discipline in voting. In addition to the government ministers who serve ex officio, some 50 percent of the elected members would not have been elected without government support, which makes them an indispensable reserve of support for the government's program. On the surface, it would appear that the government would be capable of winning any vote with little difficulty. But if that assumption held, the government would never have needed to dissolve Parliament. In fact, Parliament has frequently proved to be capable of seriously challenging the government, as will be explained below.

The government is appointed by the Prime Minister and approved by both the Amir and the Parliament. If the Parliament does not approve of the government, the Prime Minister would take the matter up with the Amir who would decide whether to dissolve the Parliament and call a new election, or to ask the Prime Minister to form a new government, to avoid the confrontation with the Parliament. In 1964, because of a number of resignations, the Prime Minister formed a new government. The majority of the elected members refused to endorse the new government. The Prime Minister took the matter to the Amir, asking for dissolution. The Amir instead ordered the Prime Minister to dissolve his cabinet and form a new one.[90] As noted, the Constitution makes appointed Ministers de facto members of Parliament. In addition, the government has to include at least one elected member of Parliament, in order to be a constitutional government. In general, the government tries to adhere to the bare minimum

[89] *Al-Qabas*, 17 May 1999.
[90] Shuhaiber, "Political Development in Kuwait", *Op. Cit.*, p. 98

constitutional requirement (one Minister who is an elected MP), with the exception of the 1992 and 1996 cabinets. The practice of keeping to the minimum has often put the government in a delicate situation, when the elected members of the Cabinet disagrees with the government on an issue and resigns, thus rendering the government unconstitutional. As a matter of caution, the government increased the number of elected members in the Cabinet to two to prevent this. The question of how many ministers should be elected parliamentarians is still intensely debated, especially after the 1992 and 1996 elections, when the number of elected Ministers was increased to five and four respectively. The Constitution limits the size of the cabinet to 16 Ministers including the Prime Minister. The government should not constitute more than one-third of the Parliament, in order, the theory goes, not to dominate voting. Ministers are considered to be full Parliament members, and may vote on all issues, except on a vote of confidence. The presence of this large number of appointed members in what is supposedly an elected body, weakens the democratic process. If left unchanged, the process of government formation, and the very idea of having appointed members in an elected body, will remain a major structural weakness haunting the Kuwaiti parliamentary process.

The Government of Kuwait, as a representative of the state, controls all major economic resources in the country. Since 1975, the government has owned 100% of the oil industry, the main source of income for Kuwait.[91] In 1975, under pressure from the Parliament, the government nationalized the oil industry, composed of the Kuwait Oil Company (previously shared by Gulf Oil and British Petroleum), the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC: a locally, privately owned firm handling distribution and refining for local use), and the Petrochemical Industries Co. (privately owned by a joint Kuwaiti-Italian venture). Since then, the vast oil resources have been under the direct political and bureaucratic influence of the government, and subject to political manipulation. The government's power, as a result, increased to the extent that no other socioeconomic players could challenge it. Most of the owners of KNPC, who were mostly members of the traditional merchant families, contested government pressures on

[91] Mary Ann Tetreault (1995). *The Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and the Economics of the New World Order,* USA: Quorum Books.

them to sell their shares, and only sold after putting up a fight. Another source of the government's power is land. Kuwait has a unique system of land ownership, under which the government owns (and has since as far back as 1954) 97 percent of the land. Aside from one to three percent which is privately owned, the rest of the land is under government control, in terms of distribution, preservation, or any other purposes.[92] The government also employs over 95 percent of the Kuwaiti labor force, and is thus able to affect directly the livelihood of most citizens.[93] These vast resources at the government's disposal give it a dominant position in any balance of power, against which no political group or social force can compete effectively. This imbalance is made worse because of the lack of legal political parties. As noted, the de facto parties have no legal recognition in Parliament, and members are considered individuals, not members of party blocs, no matter how many may have been elected on one party's platform. Hence, the government, in reality, is the only legitimate, and organized, political institution with potentially unchallenged power.

The government, in theory, does not interfere in the electoral process. And, also in theory, the government does not run for election, and does not favor any "official" candidates of its own. The reality however, is different. The government supports many candidates. The support may take different forms and employ differing means, depending on the candidate's value in the government's eyes. This could take the form of financial support, or facilitating various types of services for the candidate's electoral constituency, a method which is widely employed. The government's supporters, elected through this type of support, have always been a majority in the Parliament. Over the years they have normally controlled over 50 percent of the seats. Instructions are given to Ministers to facilitate all requests by certain candidates. If a loyal MP changes his views, and decides to take an anti-government position on an issue important to the government, this support will be withdrawn. That facilitation of services, or what is locally known as wasta (favoritism), is an important element in any candidate's campaign. Wasta normally continues even after the candidate is elected, if he is interested in running for a second

[92] Ghanim Alnajar, "Decision-making Process in Kuwait", *Op. Cit.*
[93] Kuwaiti Ministry Of Planning, *Statistical Year Book*, 1997, p. 32.

term. The wasta is implemented by bypassing laws and regulations, and favoritism in all government departments. This kind of indirect interference gives those candidates supported by the government a competitive edge in the general elections.

The repeated absences of Parliament have worked against the establishment of a deeply rooted democratic culture. This has confused even some government ministers. For instance, when the Five-Year Plan of 1985-1990 was prepared, it stated as its main goal principles enshrined in the Constitution and democratic values. Once the Parliament was dissolved in 1986, and several articles of the Constitution were suspended, the whole plan was put on the shelf.[94] The plan was not essential to running the country's affairs, but such a plan, with all the hard work that had been put in it, serves as a general guideline for the government. The discontinuity of the parliamentary experience has affected the MPs themselves. They are constantly haunted by the idea of the dissolution of Parliament at any moment, which does not support a stable democracy. Government assurances of its commitment to democracy and the Constitution have often proved unreliable. Just a few days before Parliament was dissolved in 1976, the Deputy Prime Minister delivered a speech commending the Parliament for its hard work and cooperation with the government. A few days later however, an Amiri decree dissolved the Parliament, saying totally the opposite.[95] During the 1986 dissolution, matters were even worse. Press censorship was introduced for the first time. Based on the author's personal experience the two main words the government's censors were ordered to censor were "democracy" and "constitution". This weakening of democratic political culture is probably the major challenge facing Kuwaiti democracy. It weakens the credibility of the Parliament, and creates a political disenchantment with the legislative authority. The mere fact that every other Parliament has been dissolved affected people's perceptions of democracy and its continuity, in which they do not know whether to look forward to the next election, or expect another dissolution.

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[94] Ministry of Planning. (1986). *The Five Year Plan (1985-1990)*, Kuwait: Government Press.
[95] *Al-Watan* (Kuwait), 31 August 1976. Also *Financial Times* (London), 31 August 1976.

Kuwaiti democracy, with all its shortcomings, has been the only ongoing democracy in the region for over 40 years. Iran had its share of democratic reforms in earlier periods, until it was ended by the US-backed coup d'etat against the nationalist government of Mohammad Mossadiq in 1953. The electoral process which was introduced following the Islamic Revolution of 1979, makes Iran the only country in the Gulf region besides Kuwait to have an electoral process with a relatively high degree of openness. Parliamentary life functioned in Iraq prior to the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958, but has been absent since. In Saudi Arabia, the appointed Shura Council is the only form of participation in government. In the other smaller Gulf Cooperation Council states, participatory forms of government are mostly restricted, so far, to the models of appointed or semi-elected Shura Councils without any real power. The only serious attempt took place in Bahrain in 1974, where a National Council, based on the Kuwaiti model, was elected, but was dissolved a year later. The regional political formation has thus always been less than favorable toward democracy and democratizing reforms. The general argument has been that democracy is a Western concept, and that the people of the Gulf are not ready for full participation, and that therefore the best system is the traditional democracy, with face to face consultation, and respect for the ruling house.[96] Endowed with vast oil resources, the Gulf countries were able to provide for many of the material needs of their people, to a degree that many democracies or revolutionary governments could not sustain, and this eased the demands for democratic reforms in the region. Such an argument was invoked as well by Kuwaiti governments, especially during the periods when Parliament was suspended, to justify its actions. Some government officials, with less emphasis, are still using the same argument. These regional pressure(s) were and still are an important factor in support of anti-democratic forces inside Kuwait. That pressure encourages and justifies actions against democracy. Any limitation to democracy in Kuwait finds a positive echo in the region.

Democracy in Kuwait is seen by its participants, both government and to some extent the political groupings, as limited to the electoral process. Most of the struggle and debate

[96] For such a conservative view see, Gulf Center for Strategic Studies, "Democratic Developments in the Gulf', *Seminar*, London, 24 November 1993.

has been confined to the parliamentary aspect of democracy. Much less emphasis has been devoted to other aspects of democratic principles, such as freedom of assembly and freedom of association. The Law of Public Benefit Societies gives the government the full authority to regulate, ban, grant, and license any society in the country. Past and present experience finds the government restricting freedom of association in an arbitrary manner. In addition, freedom of assembly has always been restricted in practice, or through the Law of Gatherings. The same could be said, to a much lesser extent, about freedom of the press. The political and opposition groups have always concentrated on the Parliament, and paid little attention to the other foundations of democracy. Their argument is that Parliament is the most important institution, and if there is no Parliament, all other freedoms will not function. The result of this argument having prevailed was that, whenever the Parliament was suspended, the whole political process was brought to a halt.

DEMOCRATIZATION AND SOME POSITIVE ELEMENTS

External pressures, whether from Western governments or non-governmental organizations, such as international human rights organizations, and education as a factor have been instrumental in "pushing" the Kuwaiti government in the direction of democratic reforms. This was especially so after Kuwait was liberated from Iraqi occupation on 26 February 1991. Kuwaiti pro-democracy elements extensively used reports published in the West in their quest for democracy.[97] Although it has been argued that "the" external elements play "the" main role in shaping the directions of the Kuwaiti polity, internal dynamics play at least as important a role, and even more so in certain cases. If these "external factors" alone were the sole influence, with no role left for the internal dynamics of the system, then Kuwait should have ended up with a Shura

[97] Kuwait's government takes notice of such pressures, and seems to be greatly influenced by them. Especially after Kuwait's liberation on 26 February 1991, these reports played a major role in improving human rights conditions in the country. Examples of such reports are, *The Bedoons in Kuwait: Citizens without Citizenship*. (1995). New York: Human Rights Watch/Middle East; *Kuwait, Three Years of Unfair Trials*. (1994). London: Amnesty International; also Neil Hicks (1993). *Laying the Foundations: Human Rights in Kuwait, Obstacles and Opportunities* New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights; Neil Hicks. (1992). *Kuwait: Building the Rule of Law: Human Rights in Kuwait After Occupation*, New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights; *Kuwait: Five Years of Impunity: Human Rights Concerns since the Withdrawal of Iraqi Forces*, London Amnesty International, 1996.

Council, on a model similar to the one prevailing in the Gulf. External factors do not, and did not, determine the details of the political system for a specific country. Even if they could, the finer details of a Constitution, a Parliament, the rule of law, and other aspects, could not be operated by external forces. Without internal dynamics capable of promoting democratic principles, the whole process would disappear in very short time.

That Kuwaiti democracy has survived all the shortcomings mentioned in the first part of this chapter testifies to the strength of these internal dynamics. They offer us insight into the question of why, after each dissolution of Parliament, the government has returned to democracy. One of the guiding principles of the Kuwaiti political system is the abovementioned concept of "joint governing", originally established between the ruling family and the leading merchant families. Although the principle was much weakened by the growth of government power after the onset of oil revenues, the historical relationship still plays a role, even if only at the level of the political subconscious. Though its influence cannot be easily measured in practice, it has always influenced political thought and directed decisions, especially in periods of crisis. Two examples might illustrate this point. In June 1970, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister at that time, Jabir al-Ahmad (the present Amir), delivered a speech which was interpreted as a criticism of the election rigging of January 1967. He criticized the poor achievements of the Parliament, for which the government was responsible, called on citizens to participate in building their own country, and assured the "people" of the government's resolve to correct wrongs, and curb corruption.[98] He was in, reality, appealing to the politically active, traditional merchants, who had withdrawn from participation in the official political machinery due to their rejection of the government's role in the 1967 elections. They used a traditional Kuwaiti opposition tool, which this author have called "opposition by withdrawal", which has proven effective in many instances over the years. The government's public apology created sharp disagreements among opposition groups over the government's guarantees that the abuses of 1967 would not be repeated, and one group decided to boycott the elections. The elections of 1971 were held with the least government interference, and a

[98] *Al-Siyasa* (Kuwait), 23 June 1970.

number of opposition figures ran and won important seats.[99] The second example involves the October 1990 Jidda Conference in Saudi Arabia, during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. The conference was an attempt by the government to demonstrate its legitimacy to the world. Kuwaitis were summoned from all parts of the world to attend in a show of solidarity, especially in the wake of the French initiative for a peaceful solution with Iraq. The Kuwaiti Government-in-Exile organized the conference as a political public relations event. The government decided upon the contents of the speeches, and who would deliver them, beforehand. However, negotiations over the structure, and the names of the speakers at the conference, were debated one day before the conference was to start. Some opposition figures threatened to withdraw from the conference, if no clear commitment to democracy and the 1962 Constitution was included in the Prime Minister's speech. The prepared speech did not include such commitments. The other point of disagreement was over who would speak representing the people, since the government had chosen one of its previous ministers to do that. As a result of these pressures, the conference ended with a public commitment to democracy, and not merely as a public relations exercise to show solidarity, as the government had intended. In addition, the person who spoke on behalf of the people was 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Saqr, the first elected Speaker of Parliament in 1963, and the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, at that time the figurehead of traditional merchant families and a critic of the government. The government seemed to be searching for legitimacy and the merchant families and opposition figures seemed to be an important element in their quest.[100]

With the adoption of the 1962 Constitution, the Kuwaiti political system became well defined and institutionalized. The Constitution was produced through an agreement between the ruler and the elected representatives of the people. There are several weak points in the Constitution, but generally, it upholds most of the principles that exist in most Western democracies, such as the separation of powers, respect for individual freedoms, the rule of law, and the like. The weaknesses of the Constitution are mainly confined to the relationship between the executive and legislative branches, where the

[99] *Al-Rayy al-'Amm* (Kuwait), 28 August 1996.
[100] For the documents and events of the Jidda Conference, see *Sawt al-Kuwayt* (London), 21 October 1990.

executive is given much more weight. Over the years, the Constitution necessarily provided the basis for most of the country's laws; it helped eliminate dependence on traditional norms and values as the basis of legal instruments. It became the driving force, and the starting point, for pro-democracy activists. Several attempts by the government to amend the Constitution have failed. The most notable case was in 1980-1981. There was no Parliament at the time as a result of the 1976 dissolution. Responding to internal and external pressures, the government formed an appointed committee to amend the Constitution. The committee was presented with draft changes to review, and was to report back to the government. The political opposition joined forces in a campaign against the committee and its role. After deliberation the committee rejected most of the points in the government's draft.[101] In response, the government hastily called new elections. After its failure with the appointed committee, the government sought to amend the Constitution through the only legitimate method, Parliament. In order to guarantee parliamentary support, sweeping changes in the electoral boundaries were introduced, increasing the number of constituencies from 10 to 25. The government studied the demographic characteristics of the constituencies, and drew the boundaries accordingly. Most opposition figures lost in the elections. The government presented its draft amendments to the newly elected Parliament. This provoked another campaign by opposition groups, which was so effective that even the most loyal MPs were afraid that they would lose their seats in the next elections. Though the draft amendments passed in the initial deliberations, under pressure, the government was forced to withdraw them. Thus the Constitution, whatever its weaknesses, remains an important political platform for the pro-democracy forces.

Kuwait has been a haven for political activity since the 1930s. With the sweeping political changes of the 1950s in the Arab world, almost all Arab political factions were reflected in the Kuwaiti political scene. Many young Kuwaitis studying abroad, primarily in Arab capitals such as Cairo, Beirut, Baghdad, and Damascus, were influenced by the politics of the time; they brought these ideas home. Many of these political groupings have been transformed in the last 50 years, but in the process, they infused lively

[101] *Report of the Committee to Amend the Constitution*, (Kuwait: unpublished, 1980).

discussion into the political process, and helped in shaping and influencing government decisions. Although political parties are not recognized in Kuwait, political groupings, as noted, announce their candidates and win seats. During the campaign to restore democracy, which lasted from December 1989 until the Iraqi invasion, these political groupings, along with independents, played a major role in bringing pressure on the government.[102]

The press, especially the five Arabic dailies, plays an influential role in affecting and directing the political decision-making process. It has been said that, if the Parliament is one wing with which democracy can fly, then the press is the other wing. It is doubtful whether the Parliament would have the same influence without the press. Privately owned, the press has gained more freedom, and a relative independence from the government.[103] For commercial and political reasons, the press strives to reflect the wide range of opinions in the society. Successful and popular papers are normally those that do not appear, in the public eye, to be loyal to the government. The parliamentary news is a major section in the dailies. The weekly parliamentary session is published in full, and occupies three to five pages. It was not surprising, then, that the press has been equally and simultaneously targeted when Parliament was under fire. In 1976, in the same decree that dissolved Parliament, the press law was amended to allow the Minister of Information to close any paper by an administrative order, as opposed to a court order. The result was one daily was closed for one month, and two weeklies for six months.[104] The parliamentary dissolution of 1986 was accompanied by the introduction of a new restrictive element. For the first time in Kuwaiti history, a pre-censorship law was introduced. This pre-censorship was completely lifted on December 1991. The reader of the Kuwaiti press today will be amazed by the high degree of permissiveness, and by the

[102] *Al-Rayy al-'Amm*, 23, 24, and 25 August 1996.
[103] The government owns the radio and television, but the press has always been privately owned. During the Iraqi occupation, the government published one daily newspaper from London, named *Sawt al-Kuwayt* (The Voice of Kuwait). Also, immediately after liberation, another government-operated newspaper was published in Kuwait named *Al-Fajr al-Jadid* (The New Dawn). Both newspapers continued publishing until the government decided to stop supporting them in December 1992. As a result the two papers ceased to exist.
[104] The daily was *Al-Watan* and the two weeklies were *Al-Hadaf* and *Al-Ra'id*.

strong opinions critical of the government expressed therein. The press, as it is today in Kuwait, plays a major role in supporting democratic principles.[105]

One characteristic of Kuwait's democratization is the low degree of political violence, even during periods of crisis. This unwillingness to use violence to settle political differences has helped in easing the tension and bitterness for the victims, and created a better atmosphere for dialogue. Even in a major political crisis on the scale of 1938, when the elected Legislative Council was charged by the Ruler with plotting to overthrow him, only two people died, and those who were arrested were imprisoned for about four years and then released. In another political crisis in 1959, in response, to a public rally where speeches to replace the ruling family were delivered, several arrests took place, but for only a day or two. In 1968 and 1969, in response to a group of Kuwaiti revolutionaries' campaign of planting explosives to protest election rigging and the visit of the Shah of Iran, those arrested were later pardoned by the Amir. The worst period for violence was that which lasted from 1986, until just prior to the Iraqi invasion in August 1990. Scores of Kuwaiti Shi'a who, allegedly, sympathized with Iran were arrested and tortured. Later in that period, when the pro-democracy movement began its campaign to restore democracy, and took to the streets in what was seen by the government as a plot against it, several arrests were made, but for a few days only and without the use of torture. It seems that the Kuwaiti culture is a non-violent culture, which sheds minimal blood to settle political differences.

A major feature of the Kuwaiti political system is the outspoken political differences between members of the ruling family. Some observers may see this as a sign of

[105] Take for example the political crisis that erupted during the second week of February 2000. In response to publishing a forged Amiri decree, the government in a hasty move, decided to close down the two newspapers which published the decree. The next day, the Parliament strongly attacked the government, and subsequently the Amir interfered and canceled the government decision. The government leaked its intention to resign which created an atmosphere of major political crisis, which was later contained for the time being. In a related move, the five editors of the Arabic dailies issued a statement criticizing the Minister of Information for what they described as his failure to protect the press during the Council of Ministers' deliberations which resulted in the Cabinet's decision to close down the two papers. The Minister of Information responded by denying the allegations and reaffirming his commitment to freedom of press. For the text of the editors' statement and the Minister's response see the Kuwaiti Arabic dailies 22 February 2000.

weakness; but it has proved to be to the benefit of a more open society, and a more participatory form of governing. One of the major elements contributing to the establishment of the 1938 Legislative Council was the sharp differences between the Amir Ahmad al-Jabir and 'Abdallah al-Salim, who became the Chairman of the Council, and later became the Amir (1950) after the death of al-Jabir. During 'Abdallah al-Salim's rule, disagreements between the Amir and other family members over democratic reforms were well known. With independence, differences of opinion were aired as well. Some members of the ruling family (two of them ministers) withdrew from Parliament, because it limited the power of the ruling family. During the dissolution of 1976, there were differing opinions over the steps and the measures taken, and the commitment to the Constitution. Probably the only time there was little disagreement among the ruling family was the period between the 1986 dissolution and the Iraqi invasion of 1990. Since Kuwait's liberation in 1991, differences over the level of commitment to democracy and the Constitution, and over the way the country is being administered, have been clear, with public statements and resignations from public office used as expressions of such differences.[106] It reached a historical climax when, on 13 July 1992, 17 junior members of the ruling family signed a petition to the Amir demanding political reforms and a clear commitment to the constitution. This was a historic event, with members of the family openly demanding change.[107] In the summer of 1993, the leadership of the group made

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[106] Najat al-Jasim, *Al-Tatawwur al-Siyasi wa al-Iqtisadi*, p. 161. For example, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad, refused to participate in the first government immediately after liberation, objecting to the way the government was formed. He also resigned twice in 1997 and 1998 over disagreement on foreign policy matters.

[107] Ruling family differences are common in Kuwait, whether in sports, business, or politics. But this document was something new. It put greater pressure on the Prime Minister (who is also Crown Prince), who was its implicit target. Parts of the document are worth quoting here: ". . . we believe that the constitution, that all Kuwaitis agreed upon, was fair to both the ruler and the ruled, and we must commit ourselves to it, and protect it as a contract which emphasizes legitimacy and justice ... freedom and democracy should be adapted to by a more open mind, and neutrality ... we have agreed among ourselves that one of the main goals of the system (meaning the ruling family), is the enlargement of the base of the political participation, which could not be attained without the enhancement of the concept of elections for everybody ... it is important to build a state of institutions, which is ruled by an institutionalized structure, which is not affected by the change of people ... [L]aw and justice, and their firm application are the safety valve of society, and should be applied fairly without favoritism or discrimination, and we should be committed to the rule of law more than anybody else ... protecting public funds is an integral part of protecting the rulership .. . the rulership should be kept away from conflicts in the society, whether political, electoral, or family matters, and should be kept away from the electoral campaign, in order to protect the system and its image. . ." *Al-Zaman* (Kuwait), 15 May 1999. The timing of the document enhanced its importance, since it was issued before democracy had yet been reinstated.

the petition public, and went further by meeting with political groupings to explain their positions and concerns. The main figure behind the petition started publishing a weekly magazine in May 1999, with highly critical opinions of the government.[108] Past experience shows that differences between ruling family members have proved to be helpful in enhancing democratic processes, and not the other way around.

The Diwaniyya is the traditional meeting area adjacent to a Kuwaiti home. There are thousands of diwaniyyas in Kuwait. They are considered social institutions; however, their political role far exceeds the seemingly purely social function for which the institution seems designed. Almost all elections and important political meetings prior to the 1950s were held in diwaniyyas, which put the institution in the forefront of political progress. It has been the place from which election campaigns of the post-independence era have been launched. No candidate can win without meeting with the major diwaniyyas of his constituency. Its social context has made it immune from government interference, since it is considered to be part of the home, which is protected by law. The pro-democracy campaign which began in December 1989 (demanding a restoration of Parliament) was known as the "Monday's Diwaniyyas", for the pro-democracy movement chose the diwaniyyas as the locale for their public rallies to demand the restoration of democracy, mainly because the diwaniyyas were exempt from the restrictions imposed by the Law Of Gatherings. Since diwaniyyas are limited in size, people turned out by the thousands and held the rallies in the streets. Although the government, in its attempt to curb the movement, stormed and closed down some diwaniyyas, the movement had already achieved its goals through the use of what had been seen as a modest social gathering place.

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[108] Nasir Sabah al-Ahmad bought the magazine al-Zaman from the previous owner Mubarak al-Jasim, under whom it was called *al-Risala*. Renamed al-Zaman, it began publishing as a monthly magazine, and then on 1 May 1999 began appearing as a weekly. Examples of the main topic on the first page of the first four issues are as follows: 1 May 1999 "In An Interview with al-Zaman, Nasir Sabah al-Ahmad: We do not Understand and We do not Accept the Government's positions"; 8 May 1999:"The Supreme Planning Council is A Lame Duck;" 15 May 1999: "The Solution is Political Reforms;" 22 May 1999:"Nasir Sabah al-Ahmad: Is there a Solution?" and "What Type of Government do we Want?." This is not the first time that a ruling family member has owned or partially owned a newspaper or magazine, but it marks the first time that the owner has developed a coherent program of reforms and a thought-out critique of government actions. Although al-Ahmad has been appointed as a special advisor to the Prime Minister recently, he is still critical thus far.

Democratization and electoral practice in Kuwait is not limited to the parliamentary elections. Elections are held all over the place in Kuwait, whether in student societies, cooperative societies, public benefit societies, the chamber of commerce, sports clubs, trade groups, trade unions, or the municipal council. As already noted, even the Kuwaiti tribes organized tribal primaries to choose tribal candidates for the general elections, which became an issue in 1999. Hardly a day passes without news of some sort of election. This familiarity with elections of various kinds has made people familiar with the importance of elections and trained them for the political process.

Although the decision shattered their hopes, they nevertheless felt that time was on their side, not on that of the government, indicating that after 25 years of a free press and democratic elections, it was too late to turn to mediaeval socio-political conditions.

Judging from the dangerous conditions threatening Kuwait, the dissolution of the Assembly was entirely justifiable. Kuwait's security has been at stake, especially since the country became engulfed in the Iraqi-Iranian war. The Iranians, believing that the Kuwaitis were assisting the Iraqis, took some retaliatory measures against Kuwait, such as attacking Kuwait oil tankers and sending their agents inside Kuwait on a series of bomb attacks against oil installations. This serious security problem was not taken into account by the Kuwait parliamentarians when they waged their campaign against the government. It became evident that the different Assembly groups were competing with each other for the honour first to cause the downfall of a government minister. This was clearly illustrated by an editorial in the Fundamentalists magazine *El-Mujtama'* (Society).

In this editorial, the fundamentalists accused their rivals, the progressive bloc, of obstructing their efforts to interrogate the education minister, in order to promote their own plan to interrogate the finance and oil ministers.[109] It is in this light that the author of this paper believes that some Kuwaiti deputies had abused their parliamentary authority to control the executive and that they failed to use this authority responsibly. It is due to this irresponsible and rash behaviour on their part that the only democratic system in the

[109] *Al-Mujtama'*, 2 May 1986.

Gulf region was shattered. Whether there is any hope of reinstating parliamentary democracy depends entirely on the Ruler's ability to resolve such issues associated with the Iranian-Iraq war and the country's economic crisis. If these problems persist, the Ruler might be compelled to resort to the formula of power-sharing. However, we have to assert here, in case this system is reinstated, the tendency of the Ruler would always be reversion to patriarchal absolutism whenever he felt that there was an attempt to undermine his political authority and institutions.

The executive branch has proven effective in deflecting or pre-empting parliamentary scrutiny even where this is nominally allowed. Kuwait offers an impressive but solitary case of parliamentary oversight. The ministers of defence and interior answer to the National Assembly, and the Interior and Defence Affairs Committee of the Parliament also questions ministers and top security officials including heads of intelligence, and, since 2002, has published an annual human rights report.[110]

While scholars have done much useful work on the causes of democratization, not much attention has been devoted to the causal importance of international variables. Empirical explanations of democratic reform in the Middle East often link the process of political change to domestic economic crises,[111] and most theoretical work on democratic change and reform also focuses far more on domestic than on international variables.[112] In sharp contrast, this chapter also explores the impact of Iraq's August 2, 1990 invasion and occupation of Kuwait, and its ongoing military threat, on Kuwait's democratic

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[110] *Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries.* (2009). United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS): New York, p.64.

[111] See Quintan Wiktorowicz. (2000). "Civil Society as Social Control: State Power in Jordan," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 33, October, pp. 47-48.

[112] For example, of the 26 variables that Huntington identifies as potentially associated with democratization, only two are international variables. Samuel P. Huntington. (1991). *The Third Wave: Democratiza- tion in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, pp. 37-38; Also, see Robert Dahl. (1989). *Democracy and Its Critics*, New Haven: Yale University Press; Deborah J. Yashar. (1997). Demanding *Democracy: Reform and Reaction in Costa Rica and Guatemala, 1870s-1950s.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, chap. 1; Larry Diamond. (1993). ed., *Political Culture and Democracy in Developing Countries,* Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner.

experiment. As Mary Ann Tetreault has shown, that experiment has some roots extending back to the 18th and 19th centuries, through key events in the 20th century.[113]

Democratic practices were viewed as useful in meeting the objectives of liberalization with education as a factor. In this sense, the crisis produced an attitudinal change and an increased commitment toward democratic practices. Second, and relatedly, the crisis generated or contributed to forms of liberalization and democratization.[114] A pre- and post-invasion analysis of the National Assembly in particular is telling in the Kuwaiti case in that, like other legislatures in the Arab world, the Assembly best reflects the nature of democratic transition.[115] It is interesting to explore Kuwaiti politics within a broader international context, because global forces and events have played a major role in creating and shaping the Gulf States,[116] and because it is recognized, albeit less often studied, that external actors can facilitate or undermine democratization.[117] On that score, prior to the invasion, Kuwait supported Iraq against Iran in the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988). Moreover, of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, Kuwait was most critical of the US regional role and sympathetic toward Moscow for most of the 1980s. The 1991 Gulf war and ongoing Iraqi threat, however, have made Washington indispensable to Kuwait. That in turn has enhanced the regime's interest in and commitment to democratic practices, albeit within an Islamic context, as Kuwaiti leaders are quick to remind Westerners.[118]

Some members of Congress who supported the move toward war, even called for a new democratically elected regime in Kuwait. As President Bush put it, members of Congress argued that the United States had "no real national interest in restoring Kuwait's rulers,"

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[113] See Mary Ann Tetreault. (2000). *Stories of Democracy: Politics And Society In Contemporary Kuwait*, New York: Columbia University Press.

[114] Definitions of these concepts vary widely. See Rex Brynen, Bahgat Korany, and Paul Noble. (1995). eds., *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World: Theoretical Perspectives*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner; Also, see Robert A. Dahl. (1995). *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*, New Haven: Yale University Press, chap. 1.

[115] See Abdo Baaklini, Guilain Denoeux, and Robert Springborg. (1999). Legislative *Politics in the Arab World: The Resurgence of Democratic Institutions*, Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner.

[116] Rosemarie Said Zahlan. *The Making of the Modern Gulf States: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar the United Arab Emirates, and Oman*, Reading, UK: Ithata Press.

[117] See Huntington, The Third Wave, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 85-99, p. 274.

[118] "Kuwait's Ambassador Replies," *Washington Post*, October 14, 1992.

and that since they are "not democratic," Washington should call for UN-sponsored elections in Kuwait in lieu of restoring the royal family.[119] The Kuwaiti leadership understood full well that perceptions of Kuwait as non-democratic were damaging. Since the 1990-91 Gulf crisis, Kuwait has remained concerned about its image. Doing so can also appease those in the US Congress that must justify their support of the war and of Kuwait to their constituents by pointing to such changes in Kuwait.[120] Explicit, implicit, and perceived external pressures in the post-war period influenced the regime in the direction of democratic reform and energized the pro-democracy movement.[121] The Bush administration pressed the Amir to re-establish the parliament which had been fairly elected according to Kuwait's 1962 Constitution, but which he dissolved in 1986. In late March 1991, Bush even sent the Amir a letter emphasizing the need to pursue "political reconstruction."[122] Secretary of State James Baker, who was sent to Kuwait after the war to push human rights and democracy, asserted that movement on these fronts would enhance "the ability of the United States to continue to support Kuwait politically and from a security standpoint, in a manner in which we [the US] supported them against the brutal aggression of Saddam Hussein..."[123] President Bill Clinton also strongly encouraged the Amir to give women the right to vote, perhaps in line with the sporadic US proclivity to push democracy in the post-Cold war era.[124] US Assistant Secretary of State William Burns was satisfied enough to describe US-Kuwaiti ties as "very solid."[125] Kuwait also launched a public relations campaign to underscore its support of the United States.

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[119] George H.W. Bush and Brent Scowcroft. (1999). *A World Transformed*, New York: Simon & Schuster, p. 358.
[120] See Shafeeq Ghabra. (1991). "Voluntary Associations In Kuwait: The Foundations Of A New System," *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 2, Spring, p. 215.
[121] See Ghanim Alnajjar. (2000). "The Challenges Facing Kuwaiti Democracy," *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 54, No. 2, Spring, p. 252.
[122] Quoted in Andrew Rosenthal. (1991). "Bush Not Pressing Kuwait On Reform," *New York Times*, April 3.
[123] Quoted in Edward A. Gargan. (1991). "Kuwait Prevents an Opposition Protest," New York Times, April 23.
[124] On that penchant, see Huntington, The Third Wave, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 91-98.
[125] Quoted in Xinhua News Agency, January 11, 2002, Comtex News Network.

DEMOCRACY, DEMOCRATIZATION AND NATION-BUILDING PROCESS

The Gulf crisis, in addition to influencing the US-Kuwaiti relationship, placed an emphasis on nation-building in its different facets.[126] The notion began to crystallize that a strong nation was important not only to provide for its citizens, but also to protect Kuwait against serious external threats, chiefly from Iraq. Nationalism and nation-building are different enterprises, though related. Ghassan Salame has argued that the failure of Arab nationalism writ large sprang largely from efforts by separate states to maintain their individual integrity against collective efforts to bring them together.[127] While pan-Arabism was not a profound force in Kuwait prior to the crisis, the crisis placed a much greater emphasis on maintaining individual, national integrity, apart from pan-Arab nationalism. In Jeffrey Herbst's words, external threats powerfully drive nationalism because people are "forced to recognize that it is only as a nation that they can successfully defeat the threat."[128] At an abstract level, the crisis contributed to a greater consciousness within Kuwait about common rather than personal welfare and about collective versus individual interests. This is because, by threatening all actors on the domestic scene, it put a premium on the type of security that is best had only through broader cooperation. They emerged in part because larger segments of society started to realize, especially after working so hard to obtain their freedom during the occupation, that they had a right to have access to information and to be "...freer in all their pursuits..."[129] If the crisis made nation-building more important, then what was the link between nation-building and democratic practices? At a grassroots level, many more individuals needed, wanted, and demanded to be involved, as reflected perhaps in increased voting activity in the post-war period, not to mention in Kuwaiti tribes where tribal chiefs heretofore unchallenged were unseated by fellow tribesman in local

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[126] For a classic argument on how war affects nation-building, see Charles Tilly, "Reflections on the History of European State-Making," in Charles Tilly, ed., The Foundation of National States in Western Europe, Princeton: Princeton University Press. On the role of war in empire building, see Ian S. Lustick. (1975). "The Absence of Middle Eastern Great Powers: Political "Backwardness" in Historical Perspective," *International Organization*, Vol. 51, Autumn 1997, pp. 653-83. On how the absence of inter-state war was a hindrance to state-building in Africa, see Jeffrey Herbst. (2000). *States And Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons In Authority And Control*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

[127] Ghassan Salame. (1988). "Integration in the Arab World: The Institutional Framework," in Giacomo Luciani and Ghassan Salame, eds., *The Politics of Arab Integration*, London: Croom Helm, p. 279.

[128] Herbst, States And Power in Africa, *Op. Cit.*, p. 127.

[129] Shafeeq Ghabra. (1994). "Democratization in a Middle Eastern State, Kuwait, 1993," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 3, Winter, p. 105.

ballots.[130] The crisis made Kuwaitis more serious about their civic duties, and about the role of the individual in relation to the society and state.

TABLE VIII: VOTING DATA, KUWAIT (1963-2000)[131]

YEAR	1981-85	1985-86	1992-96	1996-2000
No. of registered voters	42,005	56,848	81,440	107,169
Voter turnout	37,689	48,368	67,724	89,387

Not only did more individuals and groups demand participation in nation-building, but they had greater leverage to realize it. The occupation had made heroes of resistance fighters. How one acted during the crisis gained political and cultural capital in Kuwait, and motivated demands for greater participation. As Ghanim Alnajjar, a political science professor and driving force behind a loose coalition of Kuwaiti opposition groups, pointed out, those who stayed behind, while the Sabah ruling family fled, wanted "a say in their own government," through bona fide elections.[132] The Amir eventually did emerge from the war a stronger political actor in some ways.[133] Thus, desire in the citizenry for greater participation was matched by the regime's proclivity to be more accommodative. At the institutional level, the pro-democracy movement also gained influence in this time period. Scholars point to different explanations for the stability of Gulf regimes, including their rentier or semi-rentier status, which decreases their

[130] Augustus Richard Norton. (1993). "The Future of Civil Society In The Middle East," *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 47, Spring, p. 210.
[131] Based on Jill Crystal and Abdullah al-Shayeji, in Korany et al., eds., *Political Liberalization*.
[132] Quoted in Edward A. Gargan. (1991). "Kuwait Deeply Split on Vision Of a Post-Occupation Order," *New York Times*, May 19.
[133] See Zahlan, The Making of the Modern Gulf States, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 54-55.

accountability to society.[134] Thus, effecting the gradual changes that allow the regime to evolve slowly and maintain power simultaneously.[135]

Mounting public pressure for democratic reform after the war helped push the Amir to announce, on April 7, 1991, the decision to reconvene the dissolved parliament.[136] Some of this pressure could have turned violent. Indeed, the most senior Kuwaiti military officer who remained in Kuwait after the invasion, General Muhammad Badr, even asserted in 1991 that the young men who fought the Iraqi occupation might be "difficult to control" if demands for democratization were ignored by the royal family.[137]

Second, enhanced democratic practices could decrease the chances that Iraq, with or without support from other transnational and ideological forces, could subvert Kuwait. Although Iraq lost the war, it continued to threaten not only to invade Kuwait but to overthrow the Sabahs, a general fear which ranks high among the Gulf monarchies.[138] The notion that vulnerability to outside threats makes democratization more important is not new in Kuwait. Interestingly, as Crystal and al-Shayeji point out, Kuwait's regional vulnerability played a role in prompting its rulers to create the National Assembly in the first place and to use it to obtain explicit popular support, from 1961 on.[139]

DEMOCRACY AND THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Kuwait's democratic experiment has evolved slowly and mainly along the fault line that sometimes separates the regime and the Assembly. The Constitution invested the

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[134] Arab oil-exporting states are sometimes referred to as rentier states because they are sustained both economically and politically by using "rents" or income from oil. See, for instance, Jill Crystal. (1995). *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar,* New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 75-78.

[135] On this simultaneity, see Michael Herb. (1999). *All in the Family: Absolutism, Revolution, and Democratization in the Middle Eastern Monarchies,* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

[136] See John Kifner. (1991). "Emir Vows to Hold Elections But He Offers No Firm Date," *New York Times,* April 8.

[137] Quoted in Youssef M. Ibrahim. (1991). "Kuwaiti Dissident Warns of Showdown on Reform," *New York Times,* April 9.

[138] See F. Gregory Gause III. (1994). *Oil Monarchies: Domestic and Security Challenges in the Arab Gulf States,* New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, chap. 5.

[139] Crystal and al-Shayeji, "The Pro-Democratic Agenda in Kuwait," in Korany et al., eds., Political Liberalization, *Op. Cit.,* pp. 113-114.

Assembly with some important powers.[140] That lays the basis for institutional tension between the opposition which seeks to check the royal family by trying to enforce the Constitution, and the royal family which seeks to assert its powers without any significant checks.[141] Conflicts have endured between the government and opposition over how much power the Constitution gives the Assembly. As one manifestation of this enduring struggle, the Assembly, as noted earlier, was dissolved in 1986 by the Amir. That action triggered a pro-democracy constitutionalist movement which included an interesting amalgam of activists, liberals, merchants, Islamists, and former Assembly members. However, by the eve of the invasion, the authoritarianism of the Sabahs had reached a peak. The parliament had been formed entirely by appointment after the Assembly had been suspended, and the opposition in the parliament was quite weak.[142] The occupation of Kuwait and the war strengthened the pro-democracy movement, which successfully pushed the Amir to restore the Assembly and to democratize, an act that he saw as important in the face of the continuing Iraqi threat.[143] In fact, while in exile, the Amir met with the opposition in Jidda, Saudi Arabia, in mid- October 1990. With "one eye on Kuwaitis and another on American policymakers and public opinion," as Gregory Gause has put it,[144] the Amir agreed to demands for greater democratization, provided the opposition stood by him during his exile. These demands were followed up with more demands upon his return to Kuwait.[145] While those demands reflected how the occupation impacted internal dynamics, restoring the Assembly also could deal with another reality produced by Iraq's invasion. Despite being a consummate dictator, Iraqi President Saddam Husayn justified the invasion by citing the Amir's dissolution of the 1986 parliament, Kuwait's lack of elections, and its status as a rentier state.[146] Such criticism contributed seriously to the Amir's interest in restoring the Assembly after the

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[140] The Constitution of the State of Kuwait, esp. Articles, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 79-122.
[141] On this dynamic, see Ghabra, "Democratization," esp. *Op. Cit.*, pp. 104-106.
[142] See Ghassan Salame. (1994). "Small is Pluralistic: democracy as an instrument of civil peace," in Ghassan Salame, ed., *Democracy without Democrats?: the Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World*, London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 102-103.
[143] See Crystal, Oil, 178-181; Crystal and al-Shayeji, "The Pro-Democratic Agenda in Kuwait," in Korany et al., eds., Political Liberalization, *Op. Cit.*, p. 114.
[144] Gause, Oil Monarchies, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 101-102.
[145] See Crystal and al-Shayeji, "The Pro-Democratic Agenda in Kuwait," in Korany et al., eds., Political Liberalization, *Op. Cit.*, p. 114.
[146] On rentier status, see Mary Ann Tetreault, "Independence, Sovereignty, and Vested Glory: Oil and Politics in the Second Gulf War," *Orient*, Vol. 34, March, pp. 96-98.

war." That the invasion was causally important is underscored clearly by the fact that the Amir seemed in no real hurry to restore the Assembly prior to the invasion.[147] Moreover, the Assembly, as Crystal and al-Shayeji point out, enjoyed a "deepened" favorable consensus on its utility and importance after the invasion in the broader Kuwaiti political spectrum.[148] Thus, the crisis reinforced and buttressed the Assembly in a grassroots, institutional, and top-down manner. To be sure, opposition leaders were not included in critical committees that were planning for the post-liberation period and that could challenge royal family power.[149] However, the crisis gave the pro-democracy movement a boost which ebbed but did not wane. Indeed, in an unprecedented act on July 13, 1992, 17 junior members of the ruling family signed a petition to the Amir. They demanded democratization and asserted unanimous agreement that "...one of the main goals of the system (meaning the ruling family), is the enlargement of the base of the (sic) political participation, which could not be attained without the enhancement of the concept of elections for everybody. The October 1992 elections were free of irregularities. As Ambassador Gnehm asserted, the "process was extremely good at establishing at a grass-roots level the idea of democracy."[150] These elections reflected a victory for pro-democracy forces. Among other things, they managed to obtain the appointment of six elected parliamentary members to the cabinet.[151] Oppositional forces won a majority of nearly 35 seats; 19 went to Islamist groups, 16 to secular democratic groups, and 15 to pro-regime or royalist forces. Despite efforts by the regime to act without political checks, the Assembly has asserted its rights increasingly since the Gulf crisis. They include investigating government conduct, debating issues publicly, overruling the Amir by simple majority, and approving laws. Since the elections of 1992, a focal point of dispute has revolved around the Assembly's right to review laws. Under Article 71, the Assembly has the right to review laws issued in its absence and to decide not to confirm

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[147] Crystal and al-Shayeji, "The Pro-Democratic Agenda in Kuwait," in Korany et al., eds., Political Liberalization, *Op. Cit.*, p. 114.
[148] Ibid, p. 102.
[149] See Tetreault, Stories of Democracy, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 85-86. 68. Excerpt from the document, as cited in Alnajjar, "The Challenges," *Op. Cit.*, p. 257.
[150] Quoted in Chris Hedges. (1992). "Kuwaiti Opposition Members Win a Majority," New York Times, October 7.
[151] See Saad Eddin Ibrahim. (1993). "Crises, Elites, And Democratization in the Arab World," *The Middle East Journal,* Vol. 47, No. 2, Spring, pp. 296, 299.

them, in which case "they shall retrospectively cease to have the force of law, without the necessity of any decision to that effect."[152] Yet, the regime has attempted sporadically to refer Article 71 to the constitutional court, thus bypassing the Assembly, which has generated criticism that it was manipulating the Constitution.[153] In its capacity to approve the government's budget and engage in legislative oversight, the Assembly has also uncovered government waste and corruption. For instance, in 1997 it attempted to check item by item the year 2000 government economic and military development plan, whereas the government wanted parliament to vote on the plan as a whole. While this conflict was ultimately settled in the regime's favor by the pro-regime constitutional court, it did reflect some level of assertion by the Assembly. Later, in early to mid-1998, members of the Assembly excoriated officials for mishandling the budget deficit, government corruption, and poor performance. Meanwhile, others became more inclined to question openly whether democracy could allow for the few to lead in a privileged manner.[154] At a minimum, there exists a fairly regular dialogue between Assembly members who sometimes seek to check and discredit government officials, and officials eager to accommodate or at least hear their concerns. These officials also have be- come more responsive to certain political groupings that have increasingly assumed a de facto role in the post-liberation period, perhaps akin to political parties;[155] and also to independent associations that developed clandestinely during the resistance to Iraqi occupation.[156] These associations include trade unions, business organizations, civic clubs, ethnic, religious, professional, and political associations. Some are voluntary women's organizations, others are humans rights or war-related organizations, some are legal and others illegal, eliciting the ire of the government. In toto, they represent an important post-liberation change in Kuwaiti politics.[157] To be sure, the Assembly's power

[152] The Constitution of the State of Kuwait, Article 71, *Op. Cit.*,

[153] For one such case, see John Cooper. (1995). "Testing times for Kuwait's Democracy," *Middle East Economic Digest*, May 26.

[154] See Hussain Abdelrahman. (1988). "Sheikh Saad calls for dialogue despite NA 'walkout'," *Kuwait Times*, August 6. In March 1998, the National Assembly even forced the resignation of then Minister of Information Sheik Sa'ud Nasir Al Sabah over the issue that his Ministry allowed more then 160 books critical of Islamic orthodoxy to be displayed at Kuwait's November 1998 Arab book fair. His criticism of Islamists in October 2000, as touched on earlier in this article, may have been partly related to that event.

[155] See Alnajjar, 'The Challenges," *Op. Cit.*, esp. 246.

[156] See Ghabra, "Voluntary Associations in Kuwait," *Op. Cit.*, p. 201, pp. 213-214.

[157] Tetreault, "Women's Rights in Kuwait," *Op. Cit.*, p. 30.

is attenuated by several factors, including division within its ranks. Islamists, some of whom seek to impose shari'a (Islamic law) and traditional Muslim values, are often pitted against so called democrats who stress civil liberties. While disunity in the Assembly can undermine challenges to the ruling family, the Assembly has become increasingly institutionalized since the crisis and harder to dissolve or manipulate in any enduring manner. As 'Adnan 'Abdal-Samad, a cleric who headed the Assembly's committee for the protection of public money put it, for anyone "who has tasted democracy, it's very hard to forget. It's like something sweet."[158] While the Amir did close down the Assembly on May 4, 1999, when the actions of top government officials came under what he believed to be excessive and unfair parliamentary scrutiny, elections were held on July 3 to elect a new Assembly.

DEMOCRACY AND THE DEFIANCE OF CONTINUITY

Critical theoretical distinctions have been made between liberal, electoral, and semi-democracies, but Kuwait is obviously not a democracy based on any accepted definition.[159] Nor would it appear to be under any definition other than one quite broad. Many Kuwaitis believe that their system is truly democratic. More to the point, while the Gulf crisis did advance democratic practices, neither the crisis nor other variables, historical or contemporary, have transformed some key elements of Kuwaiti politics. These elements are worth sketching out briefly for some balance and perspective. Kuwait's key leaders are members of the Sabah family who are not elected. Under its Constitution, its top two leaders, the Amir and the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, cannot be changed by elected bodies. Political parties remain banned, although political groupings have developed and are allowed to play a de facto role.[160] Ultimate power rests with the Amir who retains significant legislative and administrative powers and who controls the broadcast media, sometimes restricting its activity and limiting freedom of expression and assembly. That is reinforced by such things as the illegality of holding

[158] Quoted in John Lancaster. 1997. "Arab Autocrats' Staying Power Slows Advance of Democracy," *Washington Post*, 4 August.

[159] On these distinctions, see William F. Case. (1996). "Can the "Halfway House" Stand? Semi democracy and Elite Theory in Three Southeast Asian Countries," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 28, July. Also. see Larry Diamond. (1999). *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 6-17.

[160] See Alnajjar, "The Challenges," esp., *Op. Cit.*, p. 246.

public gatherings without government approval.[161] Civil rights and democratic impulses are further challenged by corruption, which has increased after the Gulf crisis, and which has generated serious criticism of the government and sporadic political crises. Across the Arab region, six Arab countries, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, continue to prohibit in principle the formation of political parties. Bahrain is the only one of the six Gulf states which affords the freedom of formation to 'political organizations'.[162] Moreover, as is well known, suffrage in Kuwait extends only to males who can trace their ancestry back to 1920, and, most recently, to male descendants of naturalized citizens as well. This amounts to a small fraction of potential voters. Women have lobbied for political rights for decades, but it was only in 1991 that the Amir promised to grant them more rights, largely in appreciation for their nationalistic role during the Iraqi occupation. There- after, the ruling family repeatedly voiced support for such measures, which generated some speculation that the Amir might even enfranchise women before the 1992 elections.[163] That was quite important as an attitudinal change, but did not materialize, partly because of tribalist and Islamist opposition. After he disbanded parliament in May 1999, the Amir, backed by the Cabinet, decreed that women should have the right to vote in the general elections of 2003, and lobbied personally for it, despite his preference for operating behind the scenes rather than in the spotlight. The new Assembly, however, voted against the decree which required a majority vote, by a count of 32-30, with two abstentions. The decree was defeated despite the fact that 15 government ministers could join the voting in favor of the decree, by virtue of a provision in Kuwait's Constitution. That was an irony because, while such intervention in an elected body was undemocratic, it sought to produce a democratic result.

While the National Assembly has been increasingly assertive, its power remains checked not only by its own divisions but also by the Amir. For their part, the Sabahs want democratization, but they do not want Islamists or democratic forces to push their

[161] Deborah L. Wheeler. (1998). *Communication Research*, Vol. 25, August.
[162] *Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries.* (2009).UNDP-Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS): New York, p.58.
[163] Mary Ann Tetreault. (1993). "Civil Society in Kuwait: Protected Spaces and Women's Rights." *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 47. No. 2, Spring, p. 289.

agendas too far, and have been willing to suspend democratic practices when necessary. In fact, while the Assembly has become more robust in the post-crisis period, we do not observe, outside of its context, much movement in Kuwait in terms of power-sharing, appointments to the sovereignty ministries (defense, finance, interior, for instance), or changes in monarchical control over oil concessions, where the regime maintains a monopoly over resources that yield it significant political leverage.[164] We must also note that not all Kuwaitis support democratization. While recognizing the complexity of Islam, its belief systems, assumptions, and behavior patterns, some scholars, as well as regional leaders, have argued that Islam and elements of democracy are incompatible.[165] A general distinction may be that while "radical" Islamists tend to reject democratization as imported, "moderates" find aspects of it compatible with Islam.[166] However, in Kuwait, the Shi'a have been most likely to support women's voting rights, although not membership in the parliament; other Islamists, by contrast, appear more concerned about seeking religious restrictions based on a narrow application of the shari'a than about practicing democratic change.[167] While evidence suggests that Islam in general is not a sufficient predictor of views on women's suffrage,[168] some Islamists in Kuwait are quite satisfied with developing "democracy," so long as it is within the confines of a patriarchical system. For instance, in July 1985, Kuwait's Committee for Qur'anic Interpretations and Legislation, responding to a government request, recommended against allowing women voting rights. It argued that such activity befitted men endowed with ability and expertise; that "Islam does not permit women to forfeit their basic commitments" of bearing and rearing children; and that women, however, could exercise

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[164] Alnajjar, "The Challenges," *Op. Cit.*, pp. 249-50.

[165] Katherine Meyer, Helen Rizzo, and Yousef Ali. (1988). "Islam and the extension of citizenship rights to women in Kuwait," *The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 37, March. Also see, for instance, King Fahd's statements in *Middle East Economic Survey*, Vol. 27, April 6, 1992, C3.

[166] See Najib Ghadbian, *Democratization and the Islamist Challenge in the Arab World*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, esp. pp. 72-80. Gudrun Kramer. (1993). "Islamist Notions of Democracy," *Middle East Report*, July-August, p. 8.

[167] See Ghabra, "Democratization in a Middle Eastern State," *Op. Cit.*

[168] One rigorous study showed that Islamic orthodoxy which refers to beliefs and decisions that center on transcendent authority, was compatible with extending women's rights; meanwhile, Islamic religiosity 'which refers to practices and behaviors themselves, was not, regardless of the respondents' sects. See 'Meyer et al., "Islam," *Op. Cit.*

indirect influence on their husbands and male relatives.[169] Islamists who largely opposed the royal decree on women's suffrage scored a major victory in 1999 when it was defeated in parliament.[170] The democratic experiment in Kuwait in its entirety is a fragile process marked by ironies and countervailing proclivities and pressures. As in other cases, like Algeria, the conundrum is that it can produce anti-democratic results.[171] Some Islamists in the Assembly want to use the democratic process to undermine it. For instance, they want to amend Article 2 of the Constitution to make Islam the chief source of legislation, rather than just one of the sources. Such an act would, in the words of al-Munis, "destroy the constitution...and the entire democratic process," and reflect the view held by not a few Islamists that at best "democracy is something manufactured by the West."[172]

The roots of participatory politics in Kuwait date back to its establishment as a society more than two centuries ago. The basic agreement among the immigrant families was to have a ruler who would consult with the people over important issues, while they supported him financially. The system was undermined by the sudden ability of the ruler to be financially independent following the discovery of oil, and the great interest shown by the external superpowers. After independence in 1961, society was transformed from the traditional form of participatory governing, to a more institutionalized democratic process. Many factors contributed to the transformation. Internally, the politically active and open merchant community were able to cultivate a cordial relationship with a benevolent ruler before he came to power. It was the country's good fortune that he ('Abdallah al-Salim) ruled for 15 years, the critical first years of the oil era. In addition, the activity of younger political groupings, and the country's increasing wealth, helped achieve the transformation. Externally, changes on the international scene, especially the British decision to withdraw from the Gulf, were important factors. The emergence of regional powers, with their own rivalry for regional supremacy, gave the small

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[169] See Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori. (1996). *Muslim Politics,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, esp. pp. 91-92.
[170] Alnajjar, "The Challenges," *Op. Cit.*, p.245. See Kuwait *al-Watan* in FBIS: NES, May 17, 1999, p. 4.
[171] Richard W. Murphy and F. Gregory Gause III. (1997). "Democracy and U.S. Policy in the Muslim Middle East," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 5, January.
[172] Quoted in Roma Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, *Op. Cit.*, January 8, 1998, in FBIS: NES (January 8, 1998).

independent state room to maneuver and choose its own political system. With the death of the Amir in 1965, and the subsequent shift of the balance of power in the government's favor, coupled with a sharp decline in the influence of merchants and political groupings, the democratic process became the first victim. This was demonstrated in the unconstitutional dissolutions of Parliament. But social change, through mass education and economic opportunities, opened the door for new socio-political forces to affect the process in the direction of a more open society. The situation reached its height with the establishment of the pro-democracy movement in 1989, which took to the streets calling for the restoration of constitutional rule. This was helped along by the change in the international order brought about by the end of the Cold War, and the impetus toward more open societies. The Iraqi invasion of August 1990, and the liberation of Kuwait by an international coalition, was a decisive moment for restoring democracy in the country.

CONCLUSIONS

Education, democratization and development are interrelated concepts and bear a reciprocal relationship. A literally strong society is supposed to be an open and modern society. It is in this vein that S.M. Lipset propounded his theory of modernization and development wherein he identified several variables to measure a modern society. Among these variables, Lipset accorded primacy to education as an important component for the modernization, particularly of the countries in the Third world. This thesis inter alia attempts to tests Lipset's hypothesis as well as most of the countries in the Third world are backward in terms of education and particularly the countries in the Arab world are far behind in education. Of late there has been a trend in the oil-rich countries to send there children to the Western world in quest of education that resulted in a substantially major segment of rich elite section demonstrating there literary capabilities in the government as well as private sectors. The mushrooming foreign education centres basically from the American and European countries in the Arab region is a testimony to the fact that the new generation in the Arab world inclined towards education. Further there has also been a trend to develop there own educational institutions catering to the indigenous needs in the Arab countries.

Leaders of Third World countries, including the Arab countries, have started looking at education as a vehicle of social justice, but also as an instrument of democratization, liberalization, in terms of overall social and economic development. This view of education has been aided by practical and theoretical considerations. Specifically, following the dismantling of colonial systems and the achievement of independence, emergent political considerations and expediency, coupled with the relative ease of modernizing education, were important factors in the expansion of educational systems. Also, the two major theoretical approaches to social and economic development, the individual and the institutional, both agreed in emphasizing the developmental role of formal education. In the countries of the Arab world, in a period of about two decades, there has been substantial expansion of educational facilities at all levels, particularly at the primary level. In these countries, however, as elsewhere in the Third World,

educational change has not functioned uniformly as the expected catalyst in the modernization process. It is here argued that those attempting to assess the impact of formal education on development have tended to bypass certain important issues which are believed to influence education's role as an agency of social change. In addition to the list of issues confronting education, which political leaders and planners in the Arab countries have identified, attention is drawn to three other sets of factors which need to be considered in evaluating the modernizing influence of education. These are factors relating to: (1) the interpretation and implementation of societal goals, (2) the implications of unbalanced institutional change, and (3) legitimate expectations of the educational institution. Evaluations of the developmental impact of education have, too often, imposed a Western-based model, overlooked the importance of the societal context, and placed hope-perhaps more idealistic than realistic- in the potential of formal education as an agent of democratization, liberalization and development in the Arab world and in particular the Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Arab access to education, for both male and female students, has grown very rapidly and in quantitative terms a great deal has been achieved. Moreover, within certain limits, a variety of educational opportunities exist for Arab students, including now more private institutions and a number of English-medium and Western-style ones, plus study abroad. The reasons for this complex mixture of systems are rooted in the co-existence of several different groups in Arab society. Some people seek to acquire Western-type skills and go for Western education. Some agree that acquisition of those skills is important, but they want to combine them with a solid grounding in Arab and Islamic culture. Still others reject Western culture and go for an Islamic education taught mostly or entirely in Arabic. The rapid expansion of educational opportunities at home, at low cost, reduced pressure to study abroad, and encouraged the growth of local educational institutions that were at least partly "Western." Yet despite the substantial quantitative expansion of educational opportunities, questions are being asked throughout the Arab world by thoughtful observers, especially in the private sector but also in government and academia, about the quality of education and the outputs of the system. Employers are increasingly complaining that job applicants have not learned skills useful in the private sector so they

must hire foreign labor or also undertake remedial training programs. Unemployed graduates also are disappointed that they are unable to find jobs they want because they lack needed skills. This phenomenon has become more apparent as governments privatize enterprises and as globalization affects more businesses. Transmission of knowledge has expanded, but problems persist because of reliance on rote learning, and little production of new knowledge. Most educational institutions are still under government control and are almost entirely paid for out of state funds, but many Arab governments are finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with the demands for education. New ways of financing education including dependence on private resources are becoming increasingly popular, and foundation support for education, still very modest, is also growing. Criticism of the educational system is also leading to greater interest in quality control and external evaluation, including consideration of accreditation systems, which currently do not exist. These are the main features of the discussion and debate currently going on throughout the Arab world about education. Although American media after September 11 have focused on the narrow question of whether Arab textbooks incite hatred of non-Muslims, and that particular issue will undoubtedly be part of the focus of Arab attention in the coming months and years, the serious discussion of educational reform have been focussed more on issues in the thesis.

Of course, there is complex interplay among the separate elements that go together to make a quality distance education program; therefore, it is important that quality assurance of all aspects of distance education programs be considered. Otherwise, the failure in assuring quality of one aspect may have a knock-on effect on the quality of the whole system. Given all issues highlighted in Chapter I, it seems honest to conclude that developing such a framework is essential for ensuring quality, but is not enough on its own to ensure quality distance education offerings. It should be regarded only as the beginning of an ongoing comprehensive process that has to be supported effectively to produce the desired results. For successfully executing such a framework, all essential synchronous conditions which foster quality assurance have to be present, such as integration of the quality assurance into the institution' commitments, staff persuasion and

engagement, commitment by each of the organizational units involved to ensure the quality in all of the services provided, and the development of a positive corporate culture.

The results confirm the diversity of the Arab world and highlight a number of strengths and weaknesses that can inform policy decisions and provide a foundation for enhanced dialogue between the public and private sector. The present findings, along with previous assessments, indicate that many countries show a respectable track record for maintaining and improving competitiveness. Yet, when benchmarked against peers in other parts of the world, many Arab economies fall behind. This applies to a larger extent to the wealthier and more advanced economies; most of the remaining Arab world compares rather favorably when benchmarked against other countries in similar stages of development. In today's globalizing world economy, the pace of reform will need to be accelerated to avoid the region falling further behind the most dynamic economies in the world, such as Singapore, Malaysia, India, and China. We have identified a number of challenges that need to be addressed to improve the competitive performance and maintain the growth momentum in the region. Given the high unemployment and the need for diversification in many countries, education reform is a high priority. Educational outputs remain mismatched with the needs of the business sector, depriving the economies of the trained talent needed to raise productivity and move up the value chain. Because innovation is the key enabler of future growth, investment in research institutions as well as incentives for the private sector to increase R&D spending will be necessary. High unemployment and rapid labor force growth are putting pressure on governments in the region to thoroughly overhaul the organization and regulation of labor markets that rely heavily on the public sector and migrant workers. More flexibility in employment regulations and increased focus on meritocracy and professional management are steps in the right direction. Although many of these reforms are politically sensitive, the current growth cycle may prove opportune for initiating labor market reforms. Similar considerations apply to goods markets in several countries that remain protected from internal and external competition. When it comes to addressing the challenges outlined in chapter I, the current oil boom is a double-edged sword. Although periods of prosperity provide a window of opportunity for introducing politically challenging reform, they also diminish the pressure for such reforms. Some of the most impressive success stories in the region, including that of the United Arab Emirates, have demonstrated the possibility of

sustained and aggressive reforms irrespective of conditions in oil markets. This, however, has often required the participation of the business community and society at large in supporting measures aimed at long-term economic prosperity.

The shape of Arab politics is rapidly evolving thanks to regional and international changes and internal developments that have been accelerated since the end of the second Gulf war. Arab regimes are now more aware of popular dissatisfaction and the support by several Arab regimes for the US war campaign has only put more pressure on the ruling regimes. Symbolic and superficial changes have been introduced in most Arab countries. State-sponsored councils and committees have been sprouting at a rapid rate in many countries, including in the Gulf region where identification with Shari'ah was all that the regimes were willing to submit to. Regular elections in Jordan, Kuwait and Lebanon have resulted in a changed political structure. It can be maintained that the influence of fundamentalism has been weakened in countries where relatively free elections have taken place. Women have not formed the backbone of fundamentalist organizations in any Arab country and they constitute the bulk of secular forces in Algeria, Jordan and Lebanon. Another feature of recent events in the West Asia is the growing role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Human rights organisations, feminist networks and election monitoring groups have received added attention, perhaps because the picture of party politics still lacks credibility. Arab states have dominated political parties, either in their countries or in other countries, for too long. Varying positions exist within the Arab countries concerning the right to form and support political parties and the degree to which such parties should be allowed to operate. Across the Arab region, six Arab countries, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, continue to prohibit in principle the formation of political parties. Bahrain is the only one of the six Gulf states which affords the freedom of formation to 'political organizations'.[1] People are often suspicious of the motivations of party leaders and they often accuse them of loyalty to external forces. Furthermore, the rise of the fundamentalist movement, which often expresses hostility to traditional party organisations in the Arab world, has not increased the credibility of political parties.

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[1] *Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries*. (2009).UNDP-Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS): New York, p.58.

Lipset's widely accepted association of high economic performance with corresponding high levels of democracy.[2] In his words: Concretely, this means that the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy. From Aristotle down to the present, [people] have argued that only in a wealthy society in which relatively few citizens lived in real poverty could a situation exist in which the mass of the population could intelligently participate in politics.[3]

Lipset establishes a linkage between wealth and democracy.[4] He does not, however, link economic fairness (equal distribution of wealth) and political fairness, i.e., democracy ('one person, one vote'). Thus for Lipset, an increment in general wealth would mean political participation without necessarily eliminating socioeconomic inequalities. Dahl, however, while of the view that a fairly high GNP per capita 'threshold' can be conducive to higher levels of contestation and participation, cautions that higher GNP levels per capita beyond an upper threshold do not necessarily 'affect [polyarchy] in any significant way'.[5] Furthermore, Dahl gives the example of US democracy (in the 19th century as observed by Alexis de Tocqueville), which was neither industrially based, nor had high GNP per capita.[6] Huntington's findings point to an 'economic transition zone' that can correspond with a 'political transition zone' where movement from non-democracy to

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[2] S. M. Lipset. (1957). 'Some social requisites of democracy: economic development and political legitimacy', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 53, No. 1, pp ???±???. While Lipset's correlation meets with wide acceptance, it does not mean there is not controversy or opposition. Cutright, who followed on Lipset's footsteps, carried out empirical research to substantiate that high socioeconomic development corresponds with higher levels of democratic development. His findings have, for instance, been disputed by Deane E. Neubauer. (1967). 'Some conditions of democracy', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. LXI, No. 4, pp. 1002-1009.

[3] Lipset, 'Some social requisites of democracy', p 75.

[4] The association between economic growth and democracy and democratization, as can be deduced from Lipset's assertion, is posited on the following tenets: first, the greater economic development is, the lesser will, or at least should, socioeconomic inequalities be, and therefore the lower the potential for political disturbance. The 'more well-to-do' societies often pursue welfarist policies to minimise socioeconomic cleavages and indirectly placate those potentially rebellious social forces who basically have nothing to lose. Second, the greater economic development is, the more 'participant' society is. Third, the greater economic development is, the less the tendency for extremism. In other words, modernisation and tolerance set in. Fourth, the greater economic development is, the smaller the margin for tyranny and dictatorship. Again, the middle class, which is assumed to be politically well organised, tends to act as a counterweight to the state.

[5] R. A. Dahl. (1971). *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, p. 68.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 68-74.

democracy occurs.[7] This however, is not irreversible. Lipset's correlation applies to the Arab setting only in one sense.[8] It explains the unsustainability of competitive (Lebanon) and semi-competitive (Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan) politics in the not so `well-to-do' Arab countries.[9] In general, however, the Arab world reveals inconsistencies. Three deviations stand out. First, the view in many parts of the Arab world is, rightly or wrongly, that democracy is amenable to high economic development, not vice versa. Second, present Arab democratisers are the ` relatively populous, poor, and politicised'.[10] Third, the well-to-do Arab rentiers states are, with the qualified exception of Kuwait, the furthest from democratization.

How can these last two deviations be explained? The anomaly in the Arab allocation or hydrocarbon states[11] is partly a result of the artificiality of oil wealth- one of a number of various possible factors. The huge returns from external oil rent- have mostly contributed to aggrandisement of the state and its political oligarchical patrons the 'rentier class'.[12] This aggrandisement applies to both oil producers and non-producers. The former directly accrued billions of petrodollars from external oil rent. The latter, which were only peripheral oil-producers, promoted from the Arab oil boom which facilitated greater Arab economic integration and interdependence. This latter group have partly become rentier economies. They rent labour, skills and expertise to the sparsely populated Arab oil-producing states earning billions of dollars in remittances. The transfer of millions of Arab petrodollars either in the form of aid or investment is another factor in the equation. Many interrelated factors are at the core of oil-related state aggrandisement.

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[7] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

[8] One of the first scholars to look at the relation between socioeconomic variables and democracy in the Middle East is Charles Issawi. (1956) See his, `Economic and social foundations of democracy in the Middle East', *International Affairs*, Vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 27-42.

[9] As ranked by Coleman on the basis of 11 indices of economic development in 1960. See table in G. A. Almond & J. S. Coleman (1960). (eds), *The Politics of the Developing Areas*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, p. 543.

[10] M. C. Hudson. (1991). 'The possibilities for pluralism', *American-Arab Affairs*, Vol. 36. p 4. Most of this edition is dedicated to the subject of democratization in the Middle East.

[11] Those that accrue huge earnings from external oil rent. The deviation applies to all the Gulf oildoms, Iraq and Libya. Huntington points out examples of these deviations- Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Oman, Libya and Iraq. See his, *The Third Wave*, pp. 59-72.

[12] See definition of a rentier state in Beblawi. (1990). 'The rentier state in the Arab world', in G. Luciani. *The Arab State*, London: Routledge, pp. 87-88.

But the point is what do public attitudes tell us about the linkage between Islam and democracy? Are public attitudes toward more democratization and political openness influenced by religiosity and adherence to Islamic belief? Popular perceptions in Western societies, often resembling anecdotal stereotypes, hold that Islam and democracy are mutually exclusive concepts, and that levels of piety and acceptance of democratic principles are inversely correlated; that is, the more religious a person is, the less likely it is that he or she will embrace democratic principles. Such perceptions of the relationship between piety and democracy in the region may be misinformed by Western experiences. In West European and American societies, more religious people indeed tend to hold more conservative views and attitudes toward governance and domestic and foreign policies. If one assumes that the embrace of and commitment to civic virtues are key requirements for the creation and maintenance of stable democracies, it is crucially important to study, monitor, and access public attitudes toward democratic principles and policies that support secularization and democratization. There have been very few attempts systematically to study the impact of Islamic religious attachments on individuals' attitudes toward democracy and governance. Islam is not necessarily an obstacle to democracy. Islamic attachments do not seem to obstruct the emergence of an open political culture, and thus eventually of sustainable democracy. Interestingly, the only significant correlation between piety and political conservatism was found among women, who seem to fear greater economic inequality between the sexes as an indirect consequence of a liberal political and economic order.

It is not unlikely that the next few years will witness competition between traditional political parties (of the left, right and centre) and the professional associations concerned with human rights, feminism, ecology and development. The competition will intensify as some of those groups seek representation in parliament, as was the case in the recent parliamentary election in Lebanon. Within this context, political parties of the left and centre are now incorporating items and issues promoted by the popular NGOs. References to the environment and human rights now make their way into the programmes of official political parties. The changing discourse is unlikely to undermine the power base of the

professional associations although it reflects a change in the discourse within the public sphere.

Caveats aside, the fact remains that incentives are a critical and critically underused-tool for effecting reform and spurring democratization in the Arab world. Current U.S. policy is based on a mix of defective assumptions: about the role of civil society, about the transformative effect of economic development, and about the efficacy of punitive policies to force change.[13] Finally, what is missing from the literature on democracy in the West Asia is any critical assessment of the concept of democracy itself. West Asian scholarship now accepts without hesitation the assumed virtues of Western democracy. That democracy is capable of resolving the acute social, economic and political problems of the Arab world is as questionable an assertion as the slogan 'Islam is the solution'. Events in Eastern and Central Europe illustrate the limitations of capitalist transformation and of democratisation. The former benefited Western economic interests, while the latter allowed wealthy elites to sing the praises of 'freedom', American style. The literature does not contain any linkage between social justice, which is essential for the long-term development of the region, and the path of democratisation. In light of the widening gap between the rich and poor in the West Asia in general, democratization does not necessarily guarantee any positive change in the lives of the majority of Arabs. Similarly, voters in Central and Eastern Europe have been returning former communists to power as a result of their disillusionment with Western democracy. This should not, of course, be interpreted as a call for the preservation of the status quo, which entails acts of violence and oppression against ordinary citizens, but it only raises questions about the wisdom of the tone of religious dogmatism in which West Asian specialists invoke their calls for the democratisation of the region.

The forces that determine whether or not civil society organisations can emerge and act as agents of democratisation are varied and diverse, often differing according to the particular characteristics of a region or country. Class composition and the nature of

[13] Steven A. Cook. (2005). Way to Promote Arab Reform, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 2, March-April. p.102.

economic development, specific societal characteristics and cultural preferences, and the pursuit of certain state policies as opposed to others all appear to be determining factors in the widespread absence, or the emergence and growth, of a dense and democratic civil society. In the Arab world, all these factors eventually boil down to the structural features and policy agendas of the state. In the Arab world, the politics of clientelistic paternalism are still alive and well, having recently experienced what amount to no more than mere cosmetic adjustments. In both the economic and political realms, dangerously high levels of functional paralysis are still a long way away. On the other hand, most of the emerging autonomous CSOs have yet to fully embrace democracy. Most, in fact, continue to adhere to dogmatic and uncompromising ideological blueprints- religious or otherwise- that are antithetical to democracy. Given the present constellation of social and political forces in today's Arab world, democratization does not appear as a likely possibility in the foreseeable future. What perhaps makes this third phase in the development of civil society unique is that for the first time associational life has organized and mobilized itself independently from the state, pressuring and demanding greater representation and accountability from public officials. Samuel Huntington's `third wave' of democratization may be irreversible if this third phase in the development of civil society continues to value and promote democratization.

So far, the majority in the Arab countries, where the process of political liberalization started in the late 1980s and early 1990s, feels that the process has been neither deep enough nor wide enough, and the situation can be described as at a standstill. Because the regimes are not very democratic in their structure, the elites within these state systems do not implement policies that advance the process of reform. And, unfortunately, the thrust of the political actions of the elites outside the state systems has not been to promote a democratic agenda. It is a combination of foreign factors--not only the US, but also Europe and the global implications of the entire World Trade Organisation (WTO) structure--that becomes crucial in advancing reform and democratization in the Arab world. It is organizations, institutions, and activists on both sides, Arabs and the US, who share the same values that will form an alliance to push the reform agenda forward. The

United States of America with its policies on the ground in the region can only cause harm to the process of reform.

During past decades, Kuwait has made great strides in the direction of development. These included creating a modern economic infrastructure and upgrading their educational system. Amid growing interest with the school system, to which over 90% of children attend, the private school industry is seen as a growth industry. This revolution in the quantitative levels of education however, suffers from qualitative deficiencies. The types of academic learning and technical training are not geared toward the requirements of the job market. In other words, there is a mismatch between the educational system, where the main focus is on arts, humanities and religious studies in order to preserve traditional culture, and the labor force, where the need is for technical and managerial skills in order to achieve a higher level of integration in the inter- national economic system. This contradiction between the desire to preserve traditional culture and at the same time aspire to be part of the global revolution in information technology is likely to endure for some time. It is further complicated by the slow change in societies' attitude toward women's status and role. There have been significant achievements but much more is still desired. There is a fundamental need to change the quality of education, to accommodate technical training and focus more on science and less on humanities.

Given the global nature of many of the structural transformations taking place, solutions to the problems must be found at international and regional level. This is particularly clear in the case of inclusive nature of educational policy, environmental threats, certain types of conflicts, and macro economic policies. At the same time, at least part of the answer to increasing insecurity must lie with the state. The state can create an enabling environment for the efforts women are making to safeguard and enhance their chances, not only for survival but also security. These efforts can only give long-lasting results if they are recognized and supported by established institutions capable of providing the necessary resources. Thus responsive and genuinely accountable governments should be counted, together with women's autonomous organisations and international agencies, among the main actors in the quest for security

This thesis has shown that even modest, cosmetic, and seemingly calculated reform initiatives had an effect on bolstering perceptions of regime legitimacy in Saudi Arabia. Indirectly, this assisted in mitigating terrorism by making the populace more willing to support the government's counterterrorism initiatives, even if the liberalization steps themselves did not speak to the militants' motivations, with the possible exception of judiciary and prison reform. Similarly, the 2005 municipal elections created an institutional framework for the peaceful airing of grievances and the discussion of issues, which was significant in the context of the kingdom's political culture. By fostering an environment conducive to Salafi participation, these elections, along with the National Dialogue sessions, deprived domestic terrorists of ideological support from key clerics. As noted by Freedom House, these steps were certainly miniscule—but they were not meaningless. There was indeed an indirect and immediate effect on curtailing violence because they came at a key juncture in the regime's counterterrorism campaign.

While the social structure of Kuwaiti society has been rapidly became comparable to most Western States today: the education and health services, social security provisions, utilities and public employment which were introduced in Kuwait compare with the most modern systems in the world. Each State provided its citizens with these services as guaranteed rights; for instance, the State is pledged constitutionally to provide every individual with a job appropriate to his qualifications. The guaranteed job concept is an Islamic social concept. Education and processes of democratization are intertwined and interrelated. It is safe, therefore, to conclude from the foregoing that Kuwait as well as the other Arab Gulf States is witnessing a rapid return to the traditional Islamic Shari'a, as a result of many important factors internally and externally. Kuwait is to be considered the leader among the Gulf States in returning to Islamic law of which education is a cardinal principle through the adoption of some Islamic Laws and their implementation and application since the beginning of the 1980s. It was the aim of the chapter II to oversee and investigate the steps followed by Kuwait -as a model in adopting education as a process of democratization and liberalization under the rubrics of established Islamic ethos.

The roots of participatory politics in Kuwait date back to its establishment as a society more than two centuries ago. The basic agreement among the immigrant families was to have a ruler who would consult with the people over important issues, while they supported him financially. The system was undermined by the sudden ability of the ruler to be financially independent following the discovery of oil, and the great interest shown by the external superpowers. After independence in 1961, society was transformed from the traditional form of participatory governing, to a more institutionalized democratic process. Many factors contributed to the transformation. Internally, the politically active and open merchant community were able to cultivate a cordial relationship with a benevolent ruler before he came to power. It was the country's good fortune that he ('Abdallah al-Salim) ruled for 15 years, the critical first years of the oil era. In addition, the activity of younger political groupings, and the country's increasing wealth, helped achieve the transformation. Externally, changes on the international scene, especially the British decision to withdraw from the Gulf, were important factors. The emergence of regional powers, with their own rivalry for regional supremacy, gave the small independent state room to maneuver and choose its own political system. With the death of the Amir in 1965, and the subsequent shift of the balance of power in the government's favor, coupled with a sharp decline in the influence of merchants and political groupings, the democratic process became the first victim. This was demonstrated in the unconstitutional dissolutions of Parliament. But social change, through mass education and economic opportunities, opened the door for new socio-political forces to affect the process in the direction of a more open society. The situation reached its height with the establishment of the pro-democracy movement in 1989, which took to the streets calling for the restoration of constitutional rule. This was helped along by the change in the international order brought about by the end of the Cold War, and the impetus toward more open societies.

Kuwait's successful tryst with democracy and extension of franchise to its women folk heralded a new era in democratic politics in the Gulf region and Arab world. It is interesting to note that women participation and contest in General elections in Kuwait have considerably risen during the last few years is an indicator of the fact that growth in education correspondingly leads to a growth in democratic activities.

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